September 2021

A Review of Rural and Remote Incentives in NSW Public Schools

NSW Department of Education

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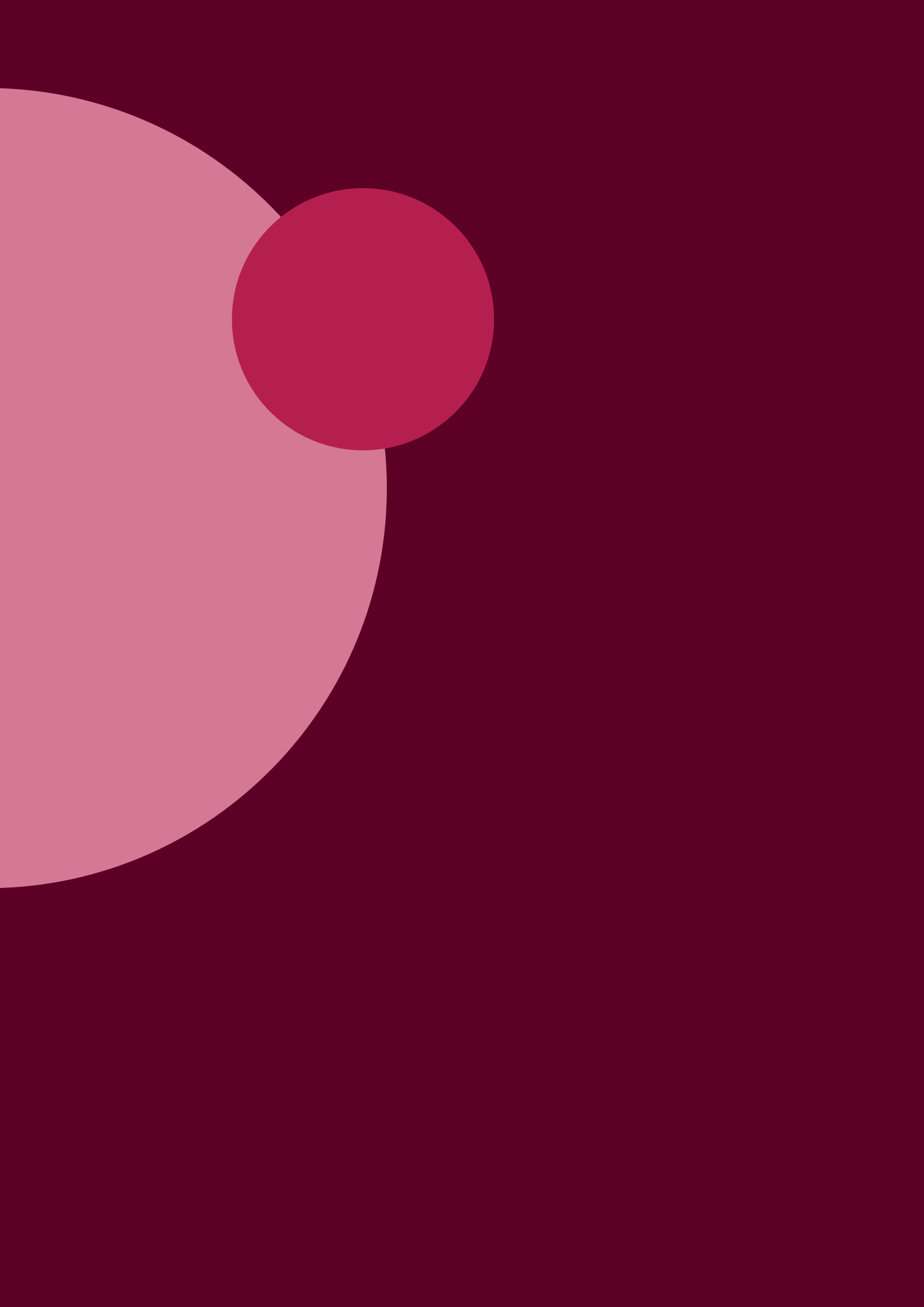
Contents

Executive Summary

The attraction and retention of staff in rural and remote schools in NSW is an ongoing challenge – and has been since at least the early 1900s. The same challenges are shared by other large jurisdictions, in Australia and overseas.

A regime of incentives to assist schools to attract and retain staff is a common feature of school systems with rural and remote locations. All the large jurisdictions in Australia have some form of incentive scheme.

In late 2020, the NSW Minister for Education requested a review of Rural and Remote incentives in NSW. The review examined the current operation of the incentives offered and their role in in attracting and retaining teachers to work in rural and remote locations.

The review process included direct and representative consultations with key stakeholders, including: staff in rural and remote schools; policy experts; staff in metro and regional schools; peak and representative bodies; industrial bodies; as well as academics in relevant fields. The feedback and experience of stakeholders were critical in developing the findings and recommendations.

> # The attraction and retention of key workers to rural and remote areas is a challenge for many geographically large jurisdictions, in Australia and around the world.

Additionally, the review process involved specific surveys, evidentiary reviews of national and international systems, and extensive data analysis.

As would be expected, the views of the disparate stakeholders were not necessarily uniform. While there were consistent themes within stakeholder feedback, there was no "standard" view of stakeholders in rural and remote communities. Some challenges are common to most communities, while others are community specific.

The review concluded that overall:

- Financial and non-financial incentives provide useful levers which contribute to the attraction and retention of staff in rural and remote schools. However, financial incentives are only part of teachers' overall motivation.
- There are a number of changes that could be made to the current incentives that could increase their impact for rural and remote staff. These include a range of short and long-term options addressing prioritisation, eligibility, transparency and simplification.
- There are other critical system features that are fundamental enablers of the incentive scheme: intake mechanisms; supports such as experience and training opportunities; and, whole of government responses to address demographic, socio-economic and infrastructure challenges.
- Incentives should be considered, designed and administered as one part of a broader overall strategy which takes account of the range of rural and remote factors, including incentives.

While incentives are the focus of this review, the challenges of the system discussed throughout this paper are broader and more complex than the incentive scheme.

Evidence and stakeholder consultations clearly revealed that human factors such as community integration; and overall systemic factors such as ease of access and clear information are key to successful attraction and retention of staff.

To address the systemic issues with the current incentives scheme, the review has recommended a staged approach to overcoming these issues, including immediate actions to influence current settings, and further longer-term actions which will require close consultation with the profession and impacted stakeholders before moving to implementation later in 2022.

The review recommends that detailed plans be developed for the implementation of initiatives, including a monitoring and evaluation framework, to support this process.

The recommendations are summarised and detailed in the next section.

In conclusion, we have greatly appreciated the openness, enthusiasm and commitment of all the stakeholders who assisted in this process.

Key Findings

The key findings of the review fall into the following five categories:

1. Transfer points and the incentives scheme

- A comparative analysis of transfer points against a variety of indexes, combining economic, social and other variables, demonstrates that the current transfer points categorisations do not reflect current supply challenges or demographic and community circumstances.
- Inequity in the transfer points, and therefore the incentive structure, was a consistent theme in feedback from stakeholders.
- Some differences between eligible and ineligible locations is a necessary consequence of any targeted assistance.

2. 'Rural' understanding and capability

- Current efforts to recruit staff for rural and remote schools are not systematic. They are predominantly either reactive, bespoke mechanisms for specific locations at specific entry points to the system; or broad and minimally differentiated.
- There is no systematic approach to preparing and encouraging undergraduate teachers to pursue a rural or remote career pathway.
- While the current incentive scheme offers additional professional development days, stakeholders reported challenges in arranging backfill, resulting in staff facing barriers to access.
- Principals require additional support and preparation to manage the unique challenges of rural and remote contexts.

3. Whole-of-government approach

- A range of factors are driving attraction and retention of staff. These focus on local amenity and community, suggesting that a more strategic approach is required to address the socio-economic challenges that make rural and remote schools more difficult to staff.

4. Housing

- The Teacher Housing portfolio is shrinking because older (lower value) stock are being sold in greater numbers in order to fund the purchase of smaller numbers of newer (more expensive) stock.
- The funding of repairs and maintenance of housing is insufficient to maintain current stock, which is resulting in a net ageing of the housing portfolio.
- The application information for housing is in different places, with no single source of information containing all the relevant guidance.

5. Accountability

- The administration of elements of the incentives scheme is managed by multiple areas of the Department and there is no consistent collection or analysis of information associated with their implementation, including interaction with policy settings.
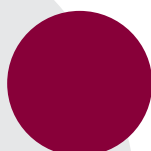
Key Recommendations

Detailed Recommendations are listed in the report.

However, a summary of the areas and key intent of the recommendations is as follows:

- Intake mechanisms should be expanded along all entry points to a rural and remote pathway. This needs to be combined with proactive, evidence-based targeting earlier in teachers' career journeys, as well as at more points in teachers' careers.
- Expanded mechanisms are needed to introduce the rural and remote pathway to early-career teachers and to provide a distinct, supported and long-term pathway for rural and remote teaching
- The transfer points system needs to be updated to take account of a wider range of factors, as well as to provide a transparent regular update in order to prevent 'creeping' inequity over time
- The incentives scheme needs to be simplified, with wider eligibility criteria and better targeting for retention as well as attraction
- Wraparound supports are needed to ensure sufficient preparation prior to every entry point
- A whole-of-government approach is necessary to address systemic challenges such as housing coordination as well as integration into wider state strategies around rural and remote issues
- There needs to be increased investment in teacher housing
- A single-point of accountability is necessary in order to coordinate, manage, measure and be held accountable for ongoing whole-of-system strategy around rural and remote challenges
- Transparency, monitoring and reporting need to be introduced against specific measures of system function and levels of service to teachers and schools within the incentive system and peripheral systems

The diagram below shows the key areas of change, mapped against the current system.

A visual representation of the current versus future state incentive system.

CURRENT STATE

NARROW, SPECIFIC ENTRY MECHANISMS MANAGED BY
DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE DEPARTMENT

LEVEL KEY

- COMPLEX INCENTIVES
- FRAGMENTED SUPPORTS
- SYSTEM LEVEL REPORTING

TEACHER

TEACHER

TEACHER

REPORTS AND STRATEGIES

REPORTS AND STRATEGIES

LIMITED AND OUTDATED TRAINING

ATTRACT

RETAIN

LIMITED PRACTICUMS / EXPERIENCES

REPORTS AND STRATEGIES

TEACHER
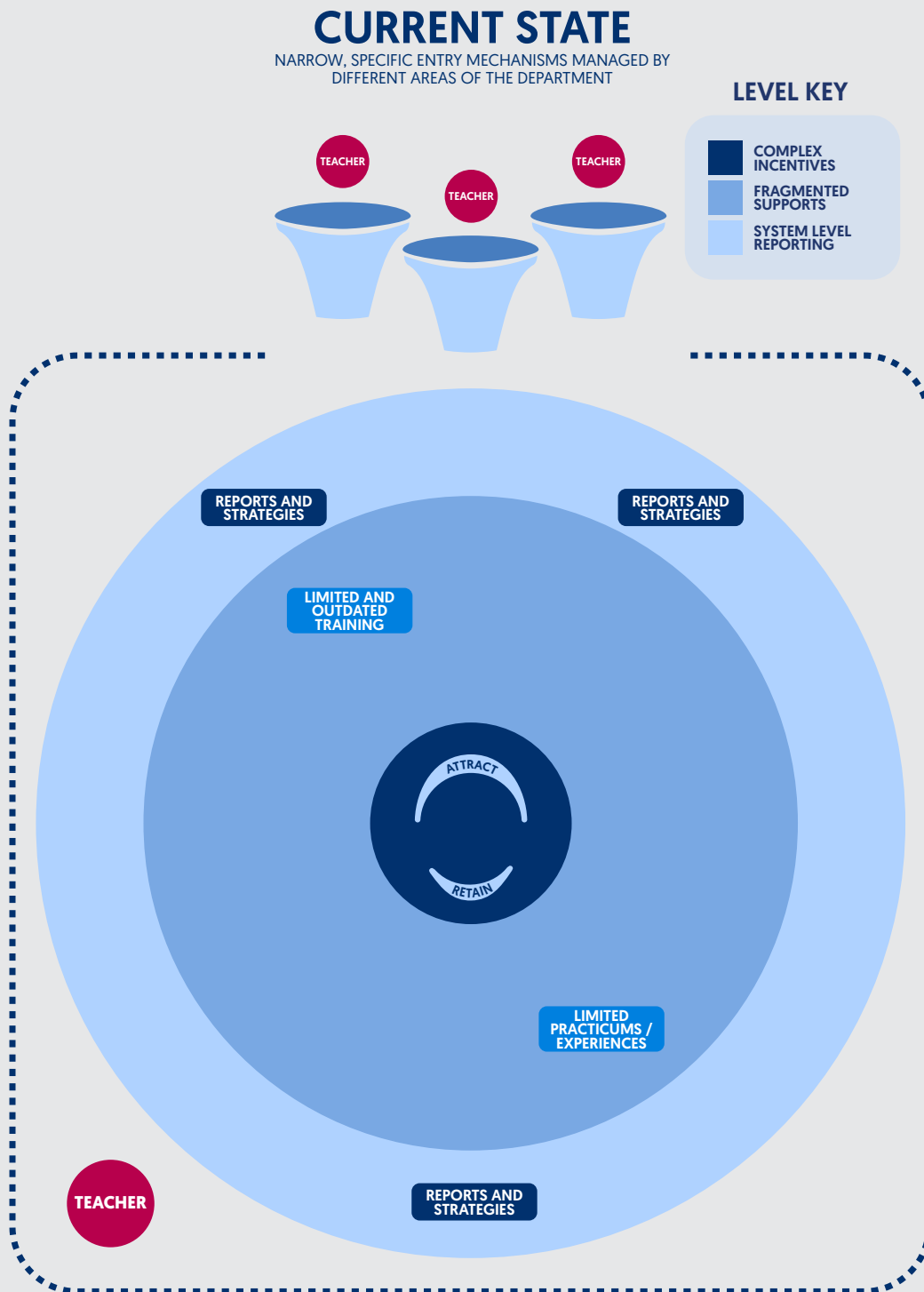
FUTURE STATE

BROADEN ENTRY POINTS COMBINED WITH
STRATEGIC AND PROACTIVE TARGETING

LEVEL KEY

- SIMPLE INCENTIVES
- WOG APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT
- WRAP AROUND SUPPORTS
- SYSTEM-LEVEL REPORTING

SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

MEASUREMENTS AND REPORTING

COMMUNITY

COST OF LIVING

COORDINATION

PRACTICUM

SPECIFIC COURSES

ATTRACT

TEACHER

RETAIN

STANDARD INDUCTION

EXPERIENCE

MANDATORY PREPARATION

HOUSING

INFASTRUCTURE

SINGLE POINT OF ACCOUNTABILITY
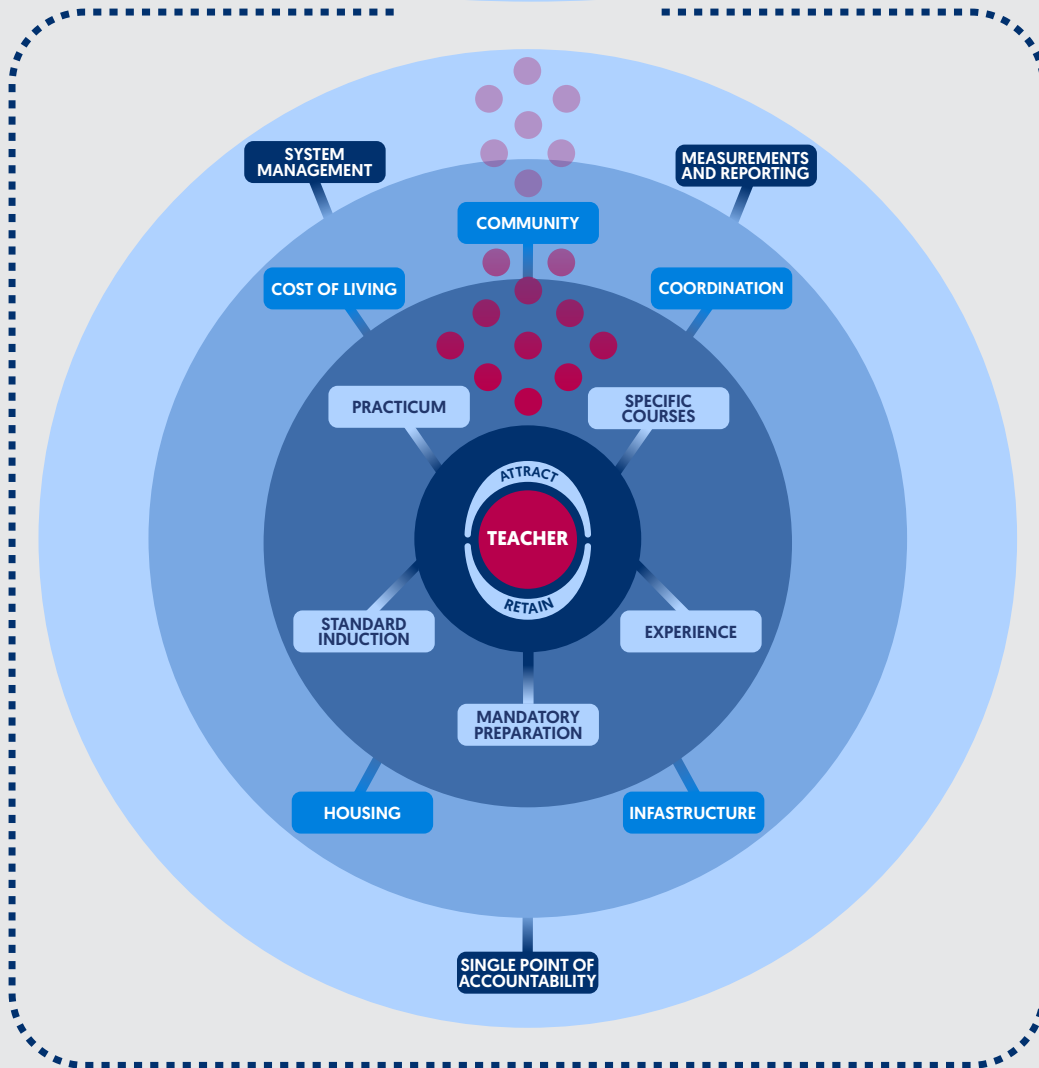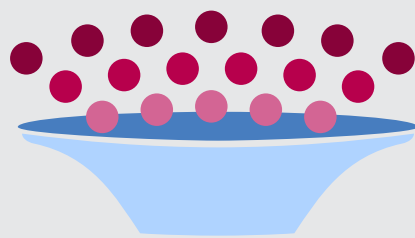
Detailed Recommendations

Update and simplify the transfer points and incentives scheme

1   Rebuild the transfer points allocation mechanism and list of incentive schools, using evidence-based indices. This should be supported by a regular review cycle.

2   Reduce structural inequity in the incentive system.

3   Invest in more effective and fit-for-purpose communications and engagement on the availability and eligibility of incentives and the operation of the transfer points system to make them easier to understand.

4   Simplify the list of available incentives and broaden the eligibility for incentives to all staff working in rural and remote schools, where appropriate.

5   Leverage good practice and ideas from schools.

Build rural understanding and capabilities

1   Use differential targeting and selection strategies to engage in a coordinated way with specific groups of potential staff who are most likely to go to rural and remote schools, across all entry points to the system, and aligned to specific rural and remote teaching pathways.

2   Increase teacher supply through scholarships and broadening entry pathways.

3   Partner with universities to increase teacher supply, preparation, and experience in rural and remote areas.

4   Increase opportunities for rural and remote experience.

5   Address barriers to teachers in rural and remote areas accessing ongoing professional development.

6   Strengthen the rural leadership career pathway.

7   Support connection and embedment of teachers within their communities.

Develop rural and remote communities and the connection of staff to those communities to ensure better retention and satisfaction

1   Attract the range of professionals required to deliver services in rural and remote communities with a coordinated, multi-agency approach.

2   Modify the approach to 'relocation' to better consider the 'family' rather than solely individuals.

Ensure access to quality housing

1   Ensure access to, and supply of, quality housing, which will entail whole-of-government mechanisms to increase housing supply, and potential market mechanisms to address localised private market failure.

2   Simplify the teacher housing application process with the teacher at the centre.

Establish centralised, dedicated support and accountability

1   Establish a central, consolidated team to oversee rural and remote staffing challenges and to provide dedicated support and accountability over relevant areas of policy and delivery.

The purpose of this review

**Assess the efficacy of the current incentive scheme, and individual
incentives within it, in attracting and retaining teachers to work in rural and remote
locations; and**

**Provide recommendations for improvement of the overall scheme and
specific incentives.**

Approach and methodology

The approach to this review was specifically designed to include robust formal evidence.

This consisted of evidence from academia, internal Departmental work, as well as independent data analysis. All data analyses were validated and quality assessed by the People Data and Analytics Division within the Department.

The review has drawn on quantitative and qualitative data analysis, a literature review of the latest scholarship, and comparative reviews of Australian and international practices.

Importantly, sources of deeper, human evidence, directly from teaching professionals, was central in this review and the significant input stakeholders across the system have informed the findings and recommendations.

The process this review took, along with the recommendations within it were co-designed with the project reference group.

The project reference group comprised senior executives from a wide selection of specialist units in the Department including[1]:

- People
- Operations
- School Improvement & Education Reform
- Education & Skills Reform
- School Performance South
- Learning Improvement

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1   Prior to the organisational restructure in September 2020, these units were known as: School Workforce and People and Culture, Finance, Educational Services, Disability Strategy Implementation Team, School Operations and Performance, Staffing and Resourcing Unit, Education Futures and Governance

A highly summarised outline of the review process is presented below.

Approach to understanding finding and developing recommendations
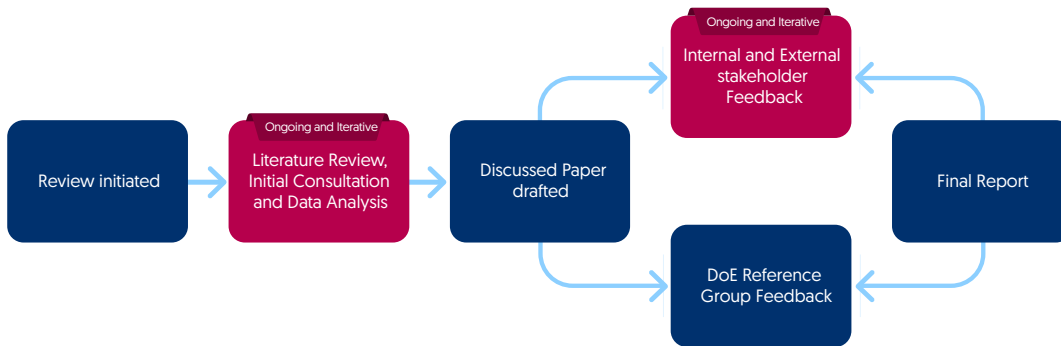
The project team engaged with over 32 stakeholder groups.

This review is also informed by and aligned with other key strategies recently developed by the Department, including:

- The Schools Digital Strategy
- The Teacher Supply Strategy
- The Rural and Remote Education Strategy

It should be noted that incentives are one of a number of tools that can be used to attract teachers to rural and remote schools. International, national and local evidence all point to incentives having only some effect on the attraction and retention of rural and remote teachers.

While incentives are the focus of this review, the challenges of the system discussed throughout this paper are broader and more complex than the incentive scheme.

Background and Context

"If you've been to one rural school, you've been to one rural school…"

— Schwartz, 2012

Part 1

The country and the city are cultural as well as geographic locations[2]
— Judith Brett

This section outlines key demographic and contextual features of rural and remote areas.

This is followed by historical context regarding the transfer points mechanism and its usage as a framework for incentives offered by the Department.

The section concludes with a detailed matrix of the Department's current incentives.

As shown in the graphic below, rural and remote schools (categorised as ASGS Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote, Very Remote) account for 45% of total schools, 25% of total students and 27% of total teachers in the NSW government schooling system.

2   Judith Brett (2011) 'Fair Share: Country and City in Australia', Quarterly Essay, June, p.42

REGION PROFILES

Distribution of schools (2,221), teachers (51,416) and students (828,998) across NSW by ASGS remoteness.

SCHOOLS
1.8% 0.5%
15.8%
19.2%
26.4%
55.5%

STUDENTS
5.4% 0.4% 0.1%
19.2%
74.9%

TEACHERS
6.8% 0.7% 0.1%
19.9%
72.5%

KEY

- Major Cities
- Inner Regional
- Outer Regional
- Remote
- Very Remote

TYPES OF SCHOOLS

PRIMARY
28.6%
16.5%
1.6%
0.4%
52.9%

SECONDARY
21.9%
10.0%
1.3%
0.0%
66.8%

CENTRAL
52.2%
17.9%
11.9%
9.0%
9.0%
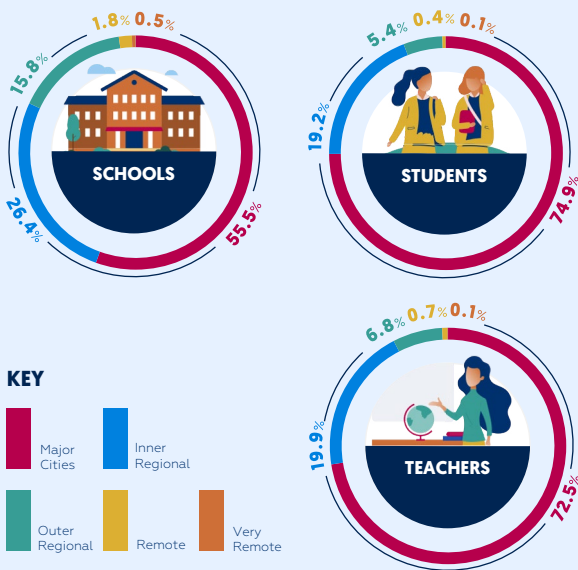
Rural and remote schools (categorized as ASGS Inner Regional to Very Remote) account for:

44%
of total schools

25%
of total students

27%
of total teachers

in the NSW government schooling system.

PROFILE OF SCHOOLS
BY REMOTENESS

MAJOR CITIES
9% SMALL SCHOOLS
5% ABORIGINAL STUDENTS
18% STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY
84 FOEI

INNER REGIONAL
34% SMALL SCHOOLS
16% ABORIGINAL STUDENTS
26% STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY
113 FOEI

OUTER REGIONAL
61% SMALL SCHOOLS
23% ABORIGINAL STUDENTS
26% STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY
128 FOEI

REMOTE
64% SMALL SCHOOLS
52% ABORIGINAL STUDENTS
36% STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY
136 FOEI

VERY REMOTE
92% SMALL SCHOOLS
76% ABORIGINAL STUDENTS
28% STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY
152 FOEI

> Higher numbers of small schools (<100 students): 92% in Very Remote versus 9% in major cities.

> Higher populations of Aboriginal students: 76% in Very Remote versus 5% in major cities.

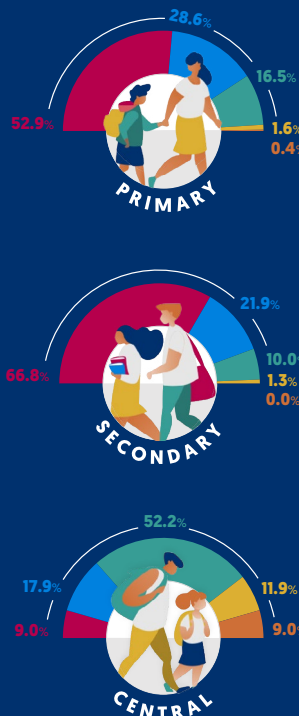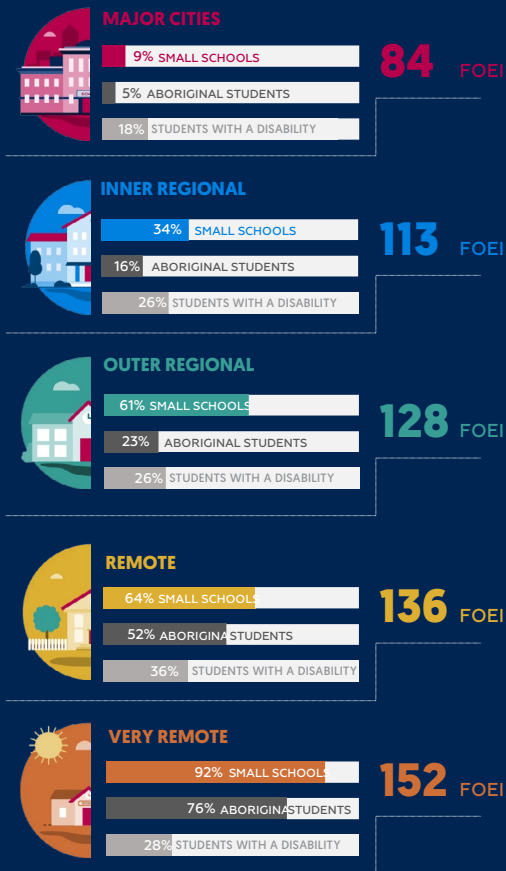> Lower socio-economic status, as measured by the Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI). A higher FOEI represents a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage. The FOEI is 152 in Very Remote versus 84 in major cities.

> Higher populations of students with disability: 36% in Remote versus 18% in major cities. Deeper analysis with respect to the 28% seen in Very Remote has highlighted more complex disability adjustments.

GENDER

TEACHERS
MALE: 22% / 26% / 25% / 26% / 29%
FEMALE: 78% / 74% / 75% / 74% / 71%
Major Cities / Inner Regional / Outer Regional / Remote / Very Remote

PRINCIPALS
MALE: 25% / 31% / 33% / 40% / 46%
FEMALE: 75% / 69% / 67% / 60% / 54%
Major Cities / Inner Regional / Outer Regional / Remote / Very Remote
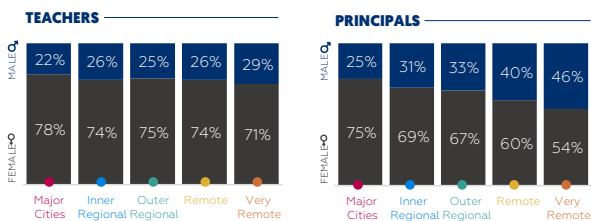
> Slightly higher proportion of male versus female teachers: 29% male in Very Remote versus 22% male in major cities.

STUDENT:TEACHER RATIO

Lower student to teacher ratios in rural and remote schools than major cities.

MAJOR CITIES 16:1
REMOTE 9:1
OUTER REGIONAL 13:1
INNER REGIONAL 15:1
VERY REMOTE 7:1
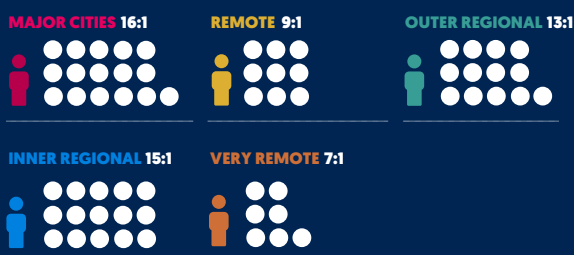
> Lower student-to-teacher ratios: A ratio of 7:1 in very remote, 9:1 in remote; 13:1 in outer regional; versus 15:1 in inner regional and 16:1 in major cities.

Rural and remote schools and teacher experience.

Statistical analysis using analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by the Tukey Post-hoc Test of the average age and tenure of teachers in NSW by Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) found no statistically significant difference in the average age and tenure between Outer Regional / Remote / Very Remote schools versus those in Major Cities.

That is, rural and remote schools in NSW do not tend to have a greater number of younger teachers and teachers with less experience.

However, statistical analysis found that teachers in Inner Regional schools have, on average, a higher age and more experience than teachers in Major Cities.

Further, analysis of age profiles by ASGS (see Appendix for detailed results) shows a number of teachers in their 60s and older in outer regional, remote and very remote areas. As they decide to retire, vacancies in these areas will likely increase.

TEACHER
PROFILES

Figures provided are averages in years.

	Major Cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote
AVERAGE AGE	44.4	45.6	44.8	44.1	43.9
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	13.4	13.9	13.7	13.0	12.1
TIME AT CURRENT SCHOOL	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.1	8.1
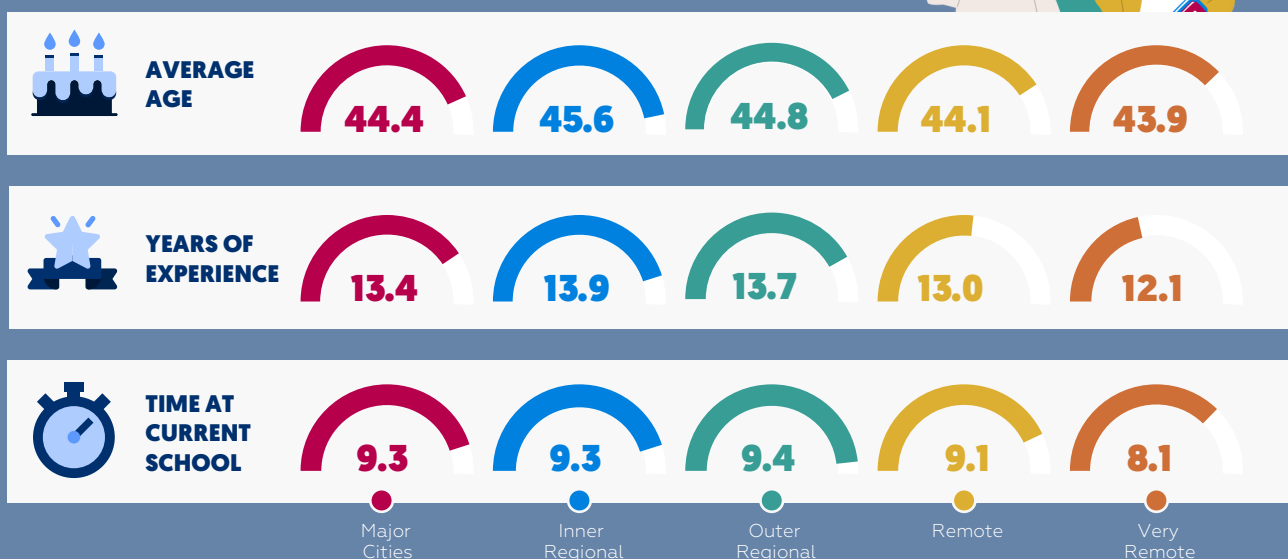
Analysis of teachers' age and experience profiles shows no significant difference between **Rural and Remote** schools versus **Major Cities**
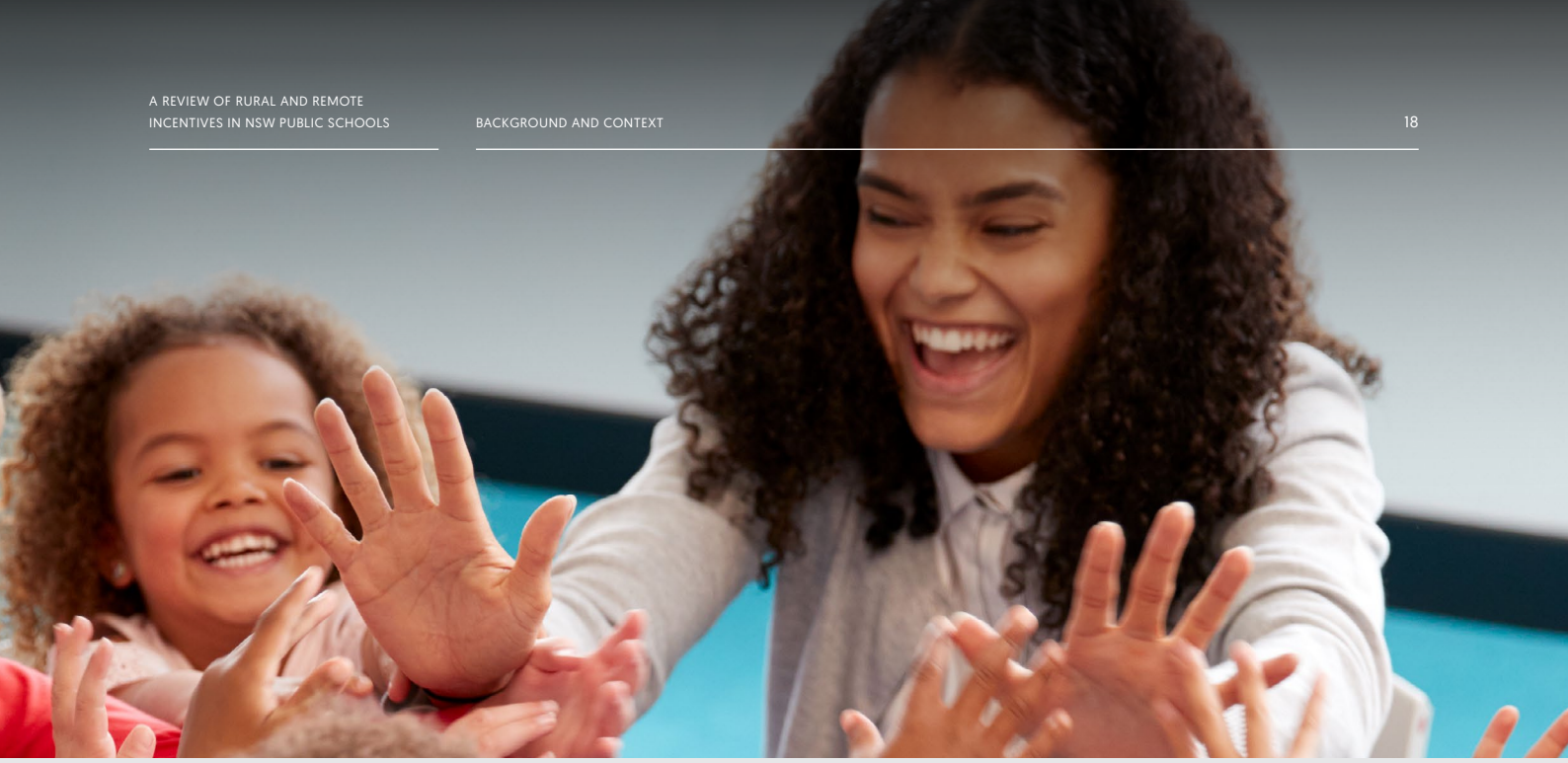
Figure 1: Location experience factors

Average Experience prior to promotion

Average time in school where promoted
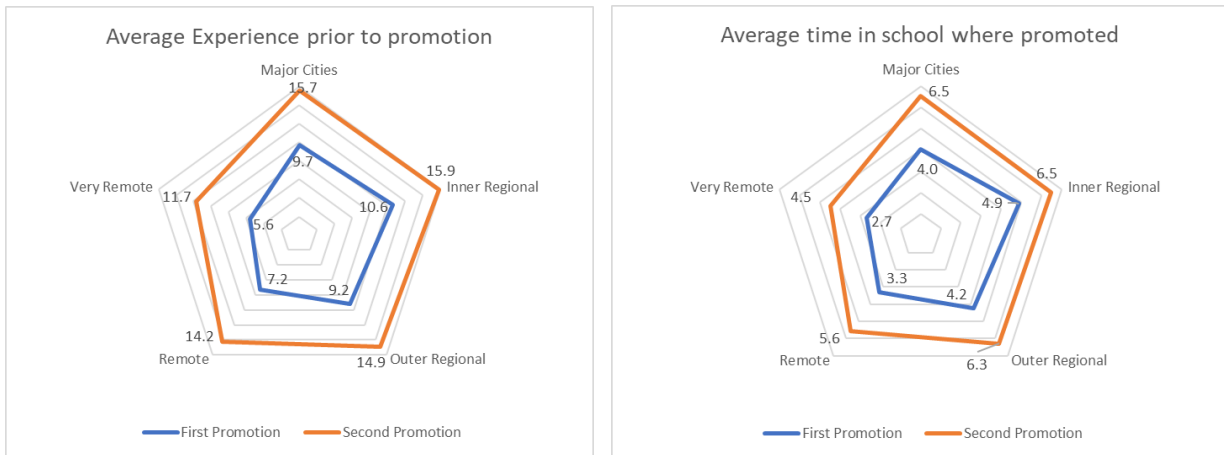
Rural schools offer accelerated career pathways, with teachers becoming leaders earlier in their career.

Analysis shows that teachers and principals in outer regional, remote and very remote areas have, on average, less experience by their first and second promotion than teachers and principals in major cities; and have spent less time at the school where the promotion was received.

Additionally, a difference emerges in the inner-regional areas, with first and second promotions taking longer than in major cities; and teachers and principals having spent more time in the school where the promotion was received (prior to first promotion) than major cities.

Deeper analysis shows a clear non-metropolitan leader pathway – non-metropolitan leadership positions are overwhelmingly filled by leaders from other non-metropolitan schools.

Similarly, the number of metropolitan leadership positions filled by non-metropolitan leaders is quite small.

History of the transfer-points mechanism

Introduced in 1987, the transfer-points mechanism allocates transfer points for each school of 1, 2, 4, 6 or 8, based on several criteria, with 8-point schools limited to those in far western/ extremely isolated locations.

The criteria used were:

- Isolation
- Distance from a large centre
- Distance from the coast
- Climate
- Favoured or less favoured location
- Staffing difficulty

The allocation method for transfer points was devised in consultation with the NSW Teachers Federation and was not documented beyond the allocation of the criteria.

A geographic mapping of the transfer points yields the following profile across the state:

The transfer-points mechanism (in combination with a transfer priority list) is used to prioritise teacher transfers into vacant roles across NSW.

Points are accumulated per year of service at a school and can be used to transfer from one school to another. Generally, the more remote the location the higher the number of transfer points.

Figure 2: Geographic view of schools by transfer points
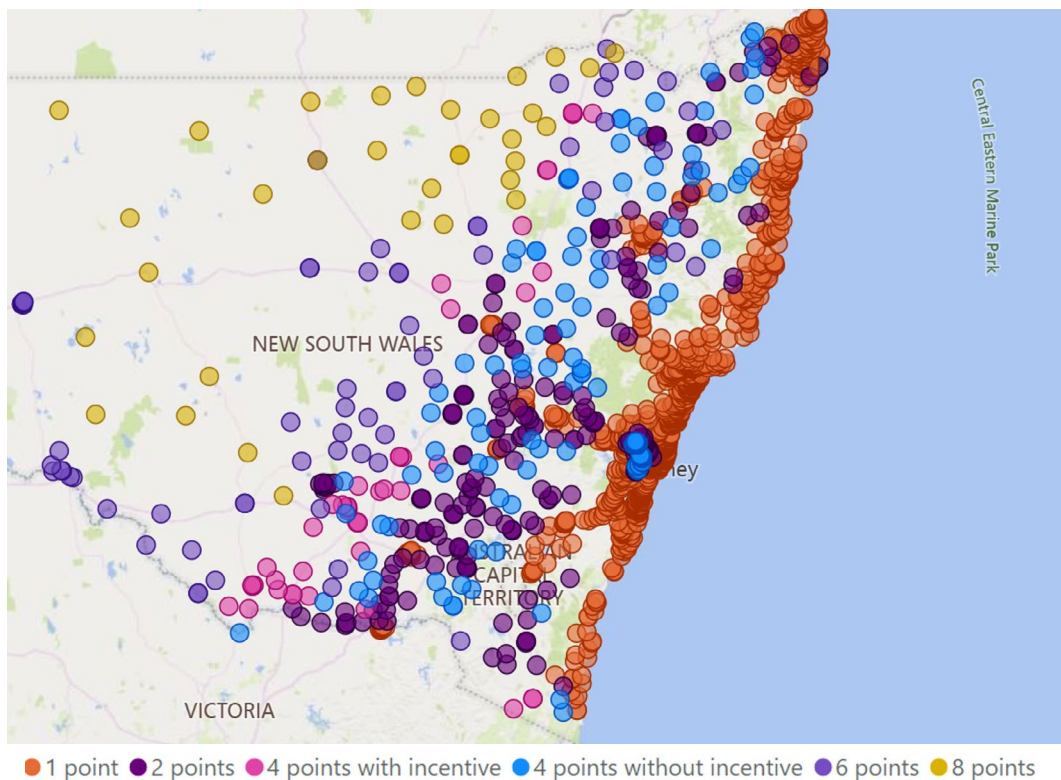
Teachers can receive a priority transfer after the following number of years:

4-point Connected Communities schools (CCs):	5 years
6-point schools (including CCs):	3 years
8-point schools (including CCs):	2–3 years

This system provides teachers with incentives to work at harder-to-staff schools by providing them with an 'exit strategy' to relocate to a preferred school.

The recruitment process supports the transfer points mechanisms, with the first stage being to fill the role through Aboriginal Employment or Incentive Transfers and the second stage being local or central appointment.

Since the transfer points mechanism was introduced in 1987, analysis of 1622 schools shows:

26 (1.6%)

schools had
a decrease
in transfer points.

109 (6.7%)

schools had
an increase
in transfer points.

1487(91.7%)

schools remained
the same.
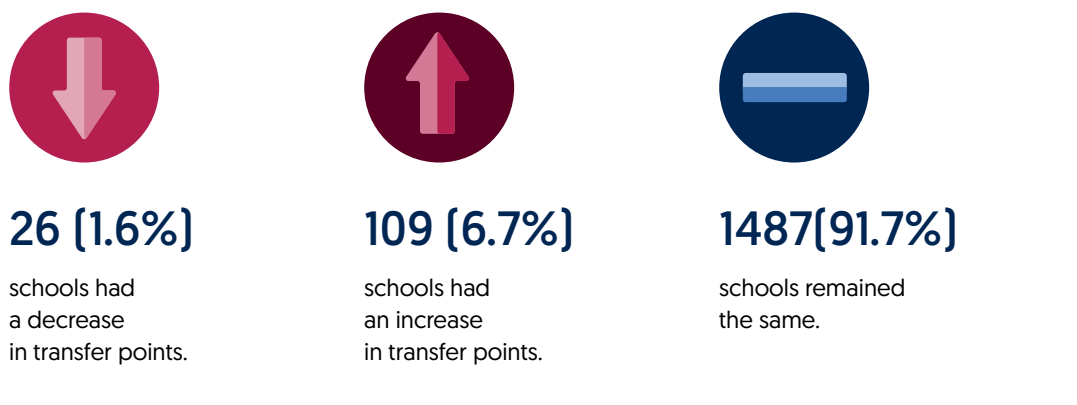
History of the Department's Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme

A s shown in the timeline below, the Department has invested considerable time and resources to develop solutions to address recruitment challenges in rural and remote schools.

In November 2013, the NSW Minister for Education released *Rural and Remote Education: A Blueprint for Action (Blueprint)* to address disparities in educational outcomes between students from metropolitan areas, compared to students from rural and remote areas.

The Blueprint committed $80 million over four years to implement a broad set of reforms and actions aligned with four focus areas, one of which was great teachers and school leaders.

This resulted in the introduction of a number of additional financial and non-financial incentives to attract and retain teachers in rural and remote areas.

The incentive scheme was broadened further by initiatives from the Rural and Remote Human Resources Strategy and to support Connected Communities schools.

In January 2018, the Department introduced a series of enhanced incentives, including more generous scholarships as well as targeted recruitment and employment practices including the implementation of a retention benefit to retain permanent employees and a recruitment bonus to attract both permanent and temporary teachers to rural and remote schools.

A further $59 million was allocated to extend funding for the incentives already in place and to fund these enhancements for an additional two years allocated to the committed timeframe in the initial Blueprint-.

NSW offers one of Australia's most generous financial and non-financial incentive schemes, if not the most generous, depending on specific circumstances.

Based on whether a school is on the incentive schools list (all 6- and 8-point schools and selected 4-point schools) additional financial and non-financial incentives are offered to attract and retain teachers.

The value and nature of some of the incentives varies based on the school's transfer points and/or whether the staff member is permanent or temporary.

Major financial benefits include:

- Rural teacher incentive (less value of rental subsidy, where applicable)
- Rental subsidy
- Retention benefit ($5,000 per annum up to 10 years)
- Experienced teacher benefit ($10,000 per annum up to 5 years)
- Recruitment bonus ($10,000 if applicable)

Professional (non-financial) benefits include:

- 10-week trial placement before permanent appointment
- Additional personal leave days
- Additional professional development days
- Priority transfer after a set number of years

Further to those above, additional allowances and benefits include:

- Relocation subsidy (if newly appointed).
- Fast track temporary to permanent conversion.
- Recognition of temporary service.
- Teacher Employment Priority Scheme (TEPS) benefit.
- Transferred Officers Compensation.

An incentives matrix outlining eligibility for incentives, and a full list of incentive schools is included as a separate appendix.

Note that there are separate lists of eligible schools for the Retention Benefit, Climatic Allowances (Heat and Cooling), Isolation from Socio-economic Goods and Services Allowance, Broken Hill Allowance.

The history outlined in this chapter point to several key findings:

- The attraction and retention of teachers at rural and remote schools has been a challenge and a key area of focus for the Department for a number of decades.
- Over time, significant resources have been committed and many layers of change and initiatives have been implemented.
- The core of the current system is several decades old, and there is significant complexity based on these 'generations' of initiatives.

Figure 3: Incentive scheme timeline

1987

Transfer point scheme implemented.

1991

October

Priority transfer after set years, implemented.

2002

Retention benefit of $5,000pa for up to five years implemented at 20 schools for teachers with minimum service period of 2 – 3 years.

2003

Teacher Housing Authority accommodation and rental subsidy implemented for 6 and 8-point incentive schools.

2012

Rural scholarship program first offered with the first group commencing in 2013.

2013

November

Rural and Remote Education: A Blueprint for Action ("the Blueprint") released.

2014

- THA accommodation and rental subsidy extended to 4-point incentive schools.
- teach.Rural scholarships implemented.
- Establishment of Education Networks.

The Blueprint committed $80m over four years

2015

Establishment of Aurora College.

2017

- 5-year bonus for Executive Principals implemented at CC schools.
- Priority Transfer for Executive Principals implemented.
- 10-week-trial placement before appointment implemented.
- Additional training and development days implemented.

2018

teach.Rural scholarships updated to include rural practicum

Recruitment bonus extended to temporary positions.

Retention benefit updated, minimum service period reduced to 12 months and benefit period extended to 10 years

2019

January
- Rural teacher incentive implemented.
- Experienced teacher benefit implemented.

25 March
- Non-School Based Teaching Service staff incentive implemented.

Term 3 and 4
- Rural experience program implemented.

2018-2020
Additional $59m

2014 - 2018

Updates made relating to the Blueprint

Updates made relating to the Rural and Remote Human Resources Strategy

Updates relating to Connected Communities Schools

Findings and Recommendations

Part 2

1

Update and simplify the transfer points and incentives scheme

Recommendations

1   Rebuild the transfer points allocation mechanism and list of incentive schools, using evidence-based indices, supported by a regular review cycle.

2   Reduce structural inequity in the incentive system.

3   Invest in more effective and fit-for-purpose communications and engagement on the availability and eligibility of incentives and the operation of the transfer points system to improve understanding.

4   Simplify the list of available incentives and broaden incentive eligibility to all staff working in rural and remote schools, where appropriate.

5   Leverage good practice and ideas from schools.

Transfer points and the incentives scheme ("the scheme") are a cornerstone of the Department's efforts to attract and retain teachers to rural and remote schools that are hard to resource. As noted, the NSW Government's investment in this scheme is comprehensive and comparable to other jurisdictions in Australia.

Despite this investment, research and consultation conducted for this review has identified a number of key challenges with the current scheme, including:

1. Its ad-hoc evolution has produced a complex system that is not regularly aligned to reflect changes in context.
2. The transfer points do not always reflect current supply challenges, demographic, geographic and other contemporary circumstances.
3. It has resulted in unintended consequences, including perceptions of inequity.
4. A lack of the sort of flexibility required for effective use of financial incentives.
5. Limitations in data and in the ability to provide robust analysis and monitoring in relation to the efficacy of individual incentives.

The review found that a number of changes should be made to the current incentives suite to optimise both their impact and efficacy in the attraction and retention of staff in rural and remote schools.

A necessary consequence of any targeted assistance is that it naturally creates differences between eligible and ineligible locations. A key part of an incentive system is making sure the decision point is optimal and maintained to remain optimal.

This chapter addresses the transfer point system and provides a mechanism for regular, ongoing recalibration to ensure the system keeps up with changes in communities, inequities are minimised, and the system is clear and transparent to all stakeholders.

Any improvements to the transfer points or incentives scheme will need to ensure that appropriate grandfathering measures are put in place to maintain the incentives for current recipients. This will require close consultation with the profession and impacted stakeholders before moving to implementation.
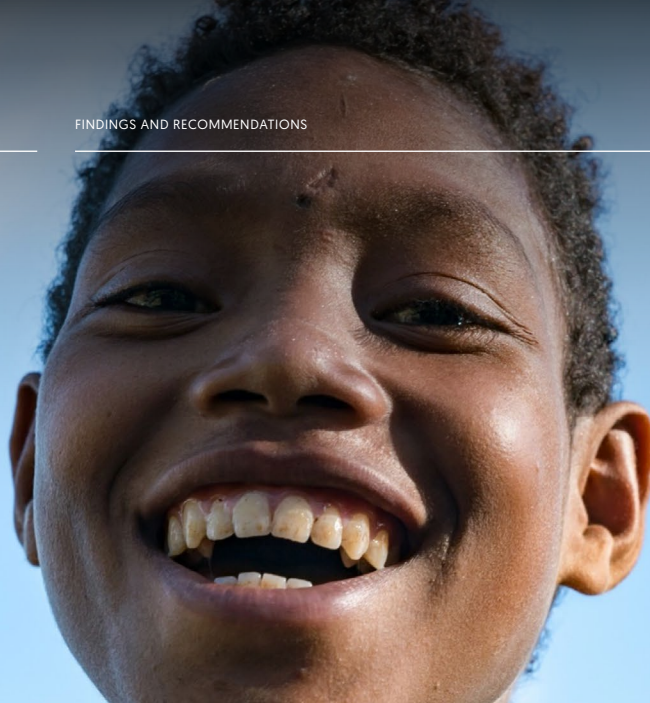
1.1

Rebuild the transfer points allocation mechanism and list of incentive schools, using evidence-based indices and supported by an ongoing, regular update cycle.

Problem Analysis	A comparative analysis of transfer points against a variety of indexes that combine economic, social and other variables demonstrates the current transfer points categorisations do not reflect current supply challenges, demographic and community circumstances.
Solution	Rebuild the calculation of transfer points so they are based on evidence-based indexes and a view of current supply challenges and can be updated on a regular cycle to prevent creeping inequities.
Discussion	conomic, demographic and social factors in rural and remote communities are continually evolving. These, in turn, have different effects on schools' abilities to recruit and retain staff in different communities.
	To account for these changes over time; it is critical that the transfer points system and list of incentive schools is regularly recalibrated and reviewed to ensure they reflect the latest best view of communities, evidence and rigour, and so they incentivise staff to move to supply-challenged locations.
	We analysed the correlation (a measure of how well two variables move in relation to each other[3]) of the current transfer-points categorisation and whether a school is on the rural and remote incentive school list (an Incentive School), against the following:

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3   A correlation coefficient (r) closer to 1 suggests a strong relationship (positive correlation) whereas one variable increases, so does the other; closer to -1 (negative correlation) suggests as one variable increases the other decreases; and close to 0 indicates no relationship.

Discussion

Four indicators of remoteness.

1. The Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Areas, which are based on relative access to services.[4] We coded 1 = major cities, 2 = inner regional, 3 = outer regional, 4 = remote, and 5 = very remote.

2. The Modified Monash Model (MMM), which provides an indication of remoteness, has been used by the Department of Health (since January 2020) in workforce planning.[5] Under the MMM model, 1 = major city, 2 to 7 = rural and remote, where the number increases as remoteness increases.

3. The Pharmacy Access/Remoteness Index of Australia (PhARIA) is a composite index of geographic remoteness and professional isolation (of the pharmacist workforce) where 0 = high accessibility and 12 = high remoteness.[6]

4. The Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+), which is based on access to 'service centres' (i.e. larger population centres) where 0 = high accessibility and 15 = high remoteness.[7]

Two social indicators. (A higher value represents socio-economic advantage)

1. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) was designed to enable 'fair and reasonable comparisons amongst schools with similar students'.[8] It provides a proxy of 'difficulty to teach'. Score from 800 to 1200 where 800 = lower educational advantage; 1000 = average; 1200 = higher educational advantage.

2. The Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) is a more general measure considering a broader number of variables (e.g. income, employment, crowding…)[9] A higher score indicates higher advantage and a lower score indicates greater disadvantage.

Two workforce vacancy indicators.

The expectation is that transfer points should positively correlate with vacancy, given that, as transfer points increase, we would expect at least greater vacancies as a percentage of current staff. This assumes that points are serving as an incentive to address supply challenges.

As vacancies at a point in time are based on open positions, and therefore do not consider historic vacancies, nor the time the vacancy has taken to fill, it is important to note this analysis is illustrative but not definitive.

Number of open vacancies as at October 2020.

Number of open vacancies as a percentage of currently employed staff. As rural and remote schools often have a lower number of total staff, it was important not only to look at total vacancy but also vacancy as a proportion of currently employed staff.

4   www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.005
5   www.health.gov.au/health-topics/health-workforce/health-workforce-classifications/modified-monash-model
6   www.adelaide.edu.au/hugo-centre/services/pharia#pharmacy-aria-categories
7   https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/ARIA-Review-Report-2011~ARIA-Review-Report-2011-2~ARIA-Review-Report-2011-2-2-3
8   "What does the ICSEA Value Mean" factsheet: https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/About_icsea_2014.pdf
9   www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2016~Main%20Features~IRSAD~20#

Figure 4: Using complete data for 2170 schools, the correlation plot yielded the following:
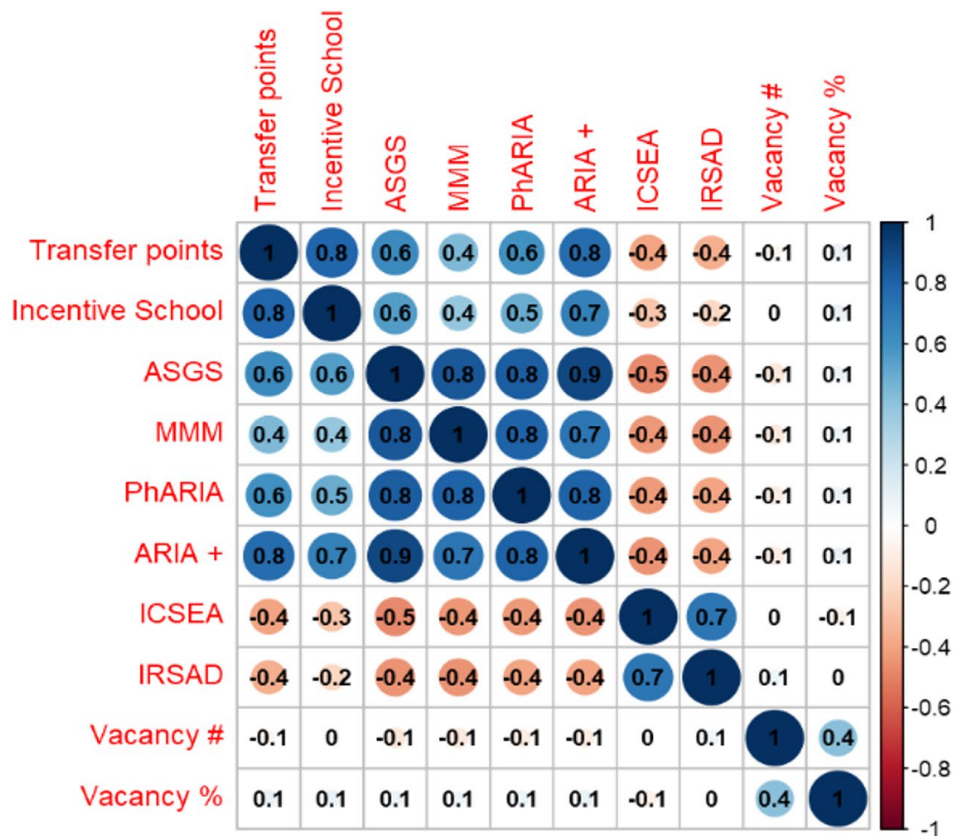
Key conclusions from the analysis:

- **Transfer points and the rural and remote incentive schools show a moderate to strong correlation with most indicators of remoteness.** However, they show a weak relationship with MMM (r = 0.4). This raises the question of how effectively they reflect rurality from a workforce perspective.
- **Transfer points and the rural and remote incentive school list (incentive schools) show a weak relationship with socio-educational and economic indicators.** Note that an inverse relationship is expected here because as Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) and Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) increase, socio-economic indicators improve. Thus, the negative correlation is expected. However, with correlations ranging from r = -0.2 to r = -0.4, the relationship is weak.
- **Transfer points and the rural and remote incentive school list show no relationship with vacancies measured both in number and as a percentage of current staff (r = 0, r = -0.1, r = 0.1).** From a state-wide perspective, this suggests a disconnect between the points and current supply challenges across the state.

This review has found that a re-calculation of transfer points so that they are (1) grounded in evidence-based indexes (2) present a view of current supply challenges and (3) can be updated on a regular cycle, would reflect a wider range of drivers and would better isolate key factors of rural and remote communities.

Any improvements to the transfer points would require further consultation with stakeholders and contextual confirmation to inform design and implementation.

Relevant considerations for further exploration include:

- Using the incentive schools list and points categorisations as a mechanism to address supply challenges (as measured by vacancies).
- Addressing inequity through using a calculation for points based on established, evidence-based indices.
- Retaining the current categories (1, 2, 4, 6 and 8).
- Retaining the same total number of incentive schools.
- Making the system more dynamic and responsive through ongoing review and recalibration.
- The assumption that any future changes will prioritise those areas and regions that are currently experiencing the greatest difficulty in filling roles.
- Detailed engagement and qualitative contextual confirmation prior to changes.

Implementation Actions

1.1.1   Update and expand the calculation of the transfer points to account for a wider range of factors, more up-to-date measures of remoteness, service availability and difficulty of recruitment. Publish the methodology and drivers used, including development of specific thresholds for different types of perceived or actual inequity.

1.1.2   Implement a regular mechanism to review and update point allocations, to ensure that gradual changes in locations do not create long-term inequities in points allocations.

1.2

Reduce structural inequity in the incentives system

Problem Analysis

Inequity in the transfer points, and therefore incentive structure, was a consistent theme in feedback from stakeholders.

While differences between eligible and ineligible locations is a necessary consequence of any targeted assistance, a number of design features could be introduced to reduce the levels of inequity being reported and to ensure that the scheme is able to appropriately respond to demand for teachers in hard-to-staff locations.

Solution

Track complaints regarding inequity and feed them into an regular ongoing review of transfer points and lists of incentive schools.

Consider opportunities to broaden eligibility for incentives to temporary teachers at incentive schools, where appropriate.

Discussion

Stakeholder feedback suggests that some elements of the current incentives scheme may have introduced a number of unintended consequences, including:

- Perceptions of inequity within schools and between schools.
- The creation of a retention disincentive due to the lower than average tenure in high-transfer-point schools, establishing a pathway-for-exit through transfer points and priority transfers.
- Some staff potentially choosing to commute into locations for the week and return home for the weekend, reducing their connection to the community the school is in.
- Competition for teachers between schools based on available incentives.
- Schools with higher transfer points being perceived as more difficult to work in.
- Schools using Resource Allocation Model[10] (RAM) funding to engage casuals and temporary staff to offset allocation limitations. (Transfer points favour permanent and temporary employees).
- This section discusses key inequities raised by stakeholders and explores the range of factors that could be used to apply transfer points more equitably.

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10   The Resource Allocation Model (RAM) is a funding model that uses a base-and-loadings approach to ensure a fair and transparent allocation of the NSW public education budget for every school.

Discussion

Inequity between staff

Schools employ teachers as well as Non-School-Based Teaching Service (NSBTS) staff, School Administrative and Support staff (SASS) and Government Sector Employees (GSEs), who often come from, or live in, the community. While a limited number of NSBTSs receive the NSBTS incentive[11] ($20–25k) and are also eligible to receive the Experienced Teacher Benefit ($10k) the cumulative amount of these incentives is lower than the amount paid to school-based teachers, while the majority of NSBTSs, SASSs and GSEs receiving no incentives.

This is a natural result of the way the policies are set. In many instances it reflects relative difficulties in recruitment, but not in all locations at all times, so there can be a perception of inequity. This example only occurs occasionally in stakeholder feedback.

Inequities between schools

Teachers at different schools in close proximity potentially receive different incentives. This is well articulated in the accompanying case study into Griffith and Leeton.

Effectively, two areas that were historically quite different can, over time, become: more similar in their base characteristics; more accessible because of improvements to roads and infrastructure; or more integrated due to expansion and growth.

These and other changes can, over time, result in a situation where a historical allocation of points becomes less applicable.

This is generally an historical anomaly but can create a genuine inequity between proximate communities. In extreme cases, this inequity could drive staff relocations over time because teaching in the community but living in a nearby location is more advantageous.

This could be addressed through proposed changes to points allocations based on a larger number of more representative factors, as discussed above.

Border inequities

Historically transfer points allocation is based on proximity to Sydney (among other things).

This ignores proximity to hubs in states that border NSW, including Queensland, Victoria and South Australia) and is therefore not a comprehensive indicator of rurality, availability of services, or proximity to amenities for some schools.

For example, Gol Gol school is 549 kilometres (approximately 5 hours and 42 minutes by car) to the closest NSW hub of Wagga Wagga, but 12 kilometres (approximately 30 minutes by car) to Mildura in Victoria, a town with nearly 30,000 people and a variety of amenities.

While this is a factor that should be considered, and can result in genuine inequity, it is important to balance it with some other practicalities. While schools in these locations may be close to hubs in neighbouring states, they do experience significant remoteness from professional development, family and other supports which may be based in NSW.

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11   NSBTS staff in state offices at Bourke, Broken Hill, Deniliquin and Moree are eligible to receive the incentive of between $20 and $25k ($25k: Bourke; $20k: Broken Hill, Deniliquin, Moree). Staff in the following roles will be eligible: Permanent NSBTS in a permanent NSBTS role; Temporary engagement in a NSBTS role; Permanent teacher temporarily assigned to a NSBTS role.

Discussion

Lifestyle inequities

Rental subsidies are available to teachers in 8-point (90% subsidy), 6-point (70% subsidy) and 4-point (50% subsidy) incentive schools. These teachers either live in Teacher Housing Authority (THA) accommodation or are eligible for THA accommodation but are renting privately because they've been unsuccessful in obtaining that accommodation and so rent privately.

These incentives result in inequities due to the varying availability, location and quality of THA Housing.

THA housing is built and maintained by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Housing is not available in all locations and varies in both quality and the amenities offered. For example, not all units have air conditioning and some need maintenance.

Depending on the quality of THA Housing, access to these properties can be seen as both an incentive and a disincentive.

A further detailed discussion on housing is included in the Housing section, below. As noted in that section, housing availability and quality is a key driver of recruitment and retention, so inequities are important.

Case Study into Griffith and Leeton

All schools in Griffith are 2-point schools, while a group of schools further out in Leeton and surrounding towns are 4-point schools, with more isolated schools receiving 6 points.

This appears to show a fair application of transfer points, with higher points for more isolated schools. However, a deeper understanding of the area identifies a series of inequities and unintended consequences of this transfer points allocation.

Griffith is a major regional city in the north-west of the Riverina region of NSW. According to demographer Bernard Salt, Griffith is one of the most desirable places in Australia to live. It has low unemployment, good population growth (the population forecast for 2020 is 27,128 and is forecast to grow to 30,507 by 2036)[12] and affordable housing (relative to major cities). The median rent in Griffith is $320 per week.

By contrast, Leeton has a population of 11,602 and is forecast to reach 12,528 by 2036.[13] Leeton's median rent is $250 per week. Leeton is a 38-minute drive from Griffith on a well-constructed road.

Under the rural and remote scheme, teachers at schools with 2 transfer points receive no incentives, while teachers (both temporary and permanent) at schools with 4 points receive a 50% rental subsidy (regardless of where they choose to rent) and additional personal leave and professional developments days. There are 18 THA properties in Griffith and 15 in Leeton.

The increased transfer points and associated incentives are motivating teachers to choose to work in schools in Leeton over Griffith. However, as Griffith offers more amenities, many teachers are choosing to work in Leeton but live in Griffith, which sometimes results in teachers living on the same street in Griffith receiving different incentives.

Consequently, many schools in Griffith are finding it difficult to fill vacancies with candidates preferring to teach in Leeton.

This is creating friction, with some members of the Griffith community accusing those going to teach in Leeton of being financially motivated, while some in the Leeton community accuse the same teachers of not being committed to their community because they choose to live elsewhere.

12   Griffith City Council
13   Leeton Shire Council

Implementation Actions

1.2.1   As part of the regular mechanism to review and update transfer points, track all complaints of inequity for the year and cross reference to have a formal mechanism for schools or the Department to review transfer point categorisations.

1.2.2   Broaden eligibility for the incentives scheme: apply the incentive scheme to all teaching staff at incentive schools (i.e. permanent and temporary teachers), where appropriate.

1.2.3   Consider a targeted recruitment bonus:-investigate and pilot earlier payment of a recruitment bonus to teach in high priority areas, to further reduce time taken to fill hard-to-staff roles.

1.2.4   Consider a one-off incentive payment for subject specific expertise as a way to address teacher supply shortages in particular subjects.

1.3

Simplify the incentive scheme and broaden eligibility

Problem Analysis

During consultations with stakeholders, we consistently received feedback that the current incentive structure is very complex. For example, with respect to the cost of living, there are multiple cost-of-living allowances including heat, cooling and isolation allowances, the Broken Hill Allowance and the rental subsidy. As well as being complex, the incentive structure does not offer an up-to-date or holistic reflection of the current cost of living for rural and remote locations. In addition, the list of eligible schools differs for each allowance.

Stakeholders also requested more flexibility in the ways incentive payments could be used to attract particular staff required by schools. For example, for STEM teachers, teachers with higher tenure/experience, teachers with experience in similar communities, etc.

Solution

Consolidate existing incentives, broaden eligibility and increase funding so that all staff in schools that are on the incentive school list receive:

1. A retention-based incentive:
- payable upon 3 years of continuous service in any incentive school.
- payable upon 5 years of continuous service in any incentive school and each year thereafter.
2. A cost-of-living allowance based on the teacher's residential address, not their school, to specifically address current inequities raised by stakeholders where some teachers are working in areas that receive incentives but living in nearby areas with schools that are not receiving incentives.

Discussion

A jurisdictional scan (refer appendix) shows NSW's financial incentives package to be comparable to other large Australian jurisdictions.

However, while used universally, the evidence consistently raises the limited value of financial incentives in effectively attracting and retaining teachers in rural and remote contexts. The evidence shows:

- Specifically, in NSW financial incentives tend to be 'more attractive to less experienced teachers'.[14]
- 'While salary structures can be a motivation for teachers to take up rural placements, on their own they have limited effectiveness, in particular due to poorly prepared teachers taking on the roles purely for financial gain and leaving soon after they begin.'[15]
- 'While extrinsic motivators such as increased wages and holiday entitlements may have a positive short-term impact on attracting beginner teachers to rural and remote locations, there is evidence that these factors do not significantly aid the retention of staff to these same locations.'[16]

The literature on this topic and the stakeholder feedback we received indicate that "bundling" financial incentives and introducing greater flexibility in their application is likely to be a more effective workforce strategy to:

- Financially compensate for perceived hardship and make other accommodations for things such as personal leave and professional development leave.
- Cover any potential shortfall if there is an associated increased cost of living.

While requiring further research and consultation with stakeholders to inform design and implementation, this review recommends the following future actions for consideration:

- Consolidation of existing incentives and broadening the eligibility for incentives so they are based on the incentive school rather than the individual who relocates.
- Extend eligibility for permanent and temporary staff in schools on the incentive school list to receive an incentive payment from the following two categories (1) a retention-based incentive (2) a cost-of-living allowance.

Basing the cost-of-living allowance on the staff member's residential address, not the address of the school they teach, specifically addresses current inequities raised by stakeholders that some teachers are working in areas that receive incentives but living in nearby areas with schools that are not receiving incentives.

14   Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2020) 'Evaluation of the Rural and Remote Education Blueprint – Final Report', DoE, p.8: cese. nsw.gov.au
15   Nick Kelly and Rod Fogarty (2015) 'An Integrated Approach to Attracting and Retaining Teachers in Rural and Remote Parts of Australia', Journal of Economic and Social Policy, 17. p.8
16   ibid. p.15

Map of current to future incentives:

From		To
Eligibility and value by school transfer points (all 8-point, all 6-point, some-4 point) schools	>	Staff at incentive schools eligible (expanded eligibility)
Retention benefit of $5,000 p.a. (for up to 10 years) Experienced Teacher Benefit $10,000 p.a. (for up to 5 years) Recruitment Bonus ($10,000) Executive Principal 5-year bonus ($50,000) – if they significantly improve outcomes Additional personal leave Additional professional development leave	>	Retention bonus following 3 years working in incentive schools Annual Retention Bonus at 5 years and every year thereafter for continuous service at incentive schools
Rural teacher incentive / Rental Subsidy, Locality Allowance (Climatic Allowance, Broken Hill Allowance, Country Area Program, Isolation from socio-economic goods and services allowance, medical and dental reimbursement, motor vehicle and depreciation allowance, vacation and travel expense), NSBTs incentive, relocation subsidy (for newly appointed teachers)	>	Cost-of-living allowance based on residential address

Implementation Actions

1.2.1 As part of the regular mechanism to review and update transfer points, track all complaints of inequity for the year and cross reference to have a formal mechanism for schools or the Department to review transfer point categorisations.

1.2.2 Broaden eligibility for the incentives scheme: apply the incentive scheme to all teaching staff at incentive schools (i.e. permanent and temporary teachers), where appropriate.

1.2.3 Consider a targeted recruitment bonus:-investigate and pilot earlier payment of a recruitment bonus to teach in high priority areas, to further reduce time taken to fill hard-to-staff roles.

1.2.4 Consider a one-off incentive payment for subject specific expertise as a way to address teacher supply shortages in particular subjects.

1.4

Leverage good practice and ideas from schools

Problem Analysis	Stakeholder consultation highlighted a number of schools where innovative practices are effectively addressing recruitment challenges.
Solution	There is value in establishing a regular mechanism for hearing from rural and remote teachers and leaders to inform ongoing innovation and enhancements to rural and remote incentives. This includes structured assessment and evaluation of resourcing models for potential broader use across NSW.
Discussion	Feedback collected through broad consultation with teachers, school leaders, representative groups and key stakeholders for this review provided a rich source of information on the challenges experienced, and the innovations that schools across the system have put in place to address them. An example of local innovation includes the Casual Supplementation Program, which was informally introduced in rural and remote areas and is now being formally piloted.
	To address rural and remote staffing challenges, the Department could launch a What Works Program to enable principals and teachers to propose and test new ideas. The ideas proposed could be assessed through an expression of interest (EOI) process for resource allocation.
	This approach would enable principals and teachers to build evidence regarding alternative approaches and accordingly share and scale-up insights.

Implementation Actions

1.4.1   Launch a What Works Program to enable leaders and teachers to submit ideas about ways to improve the attraction and/ or retention of teachers.

Pilot a selection of winning ideas and then scale successful ideas more broadly.
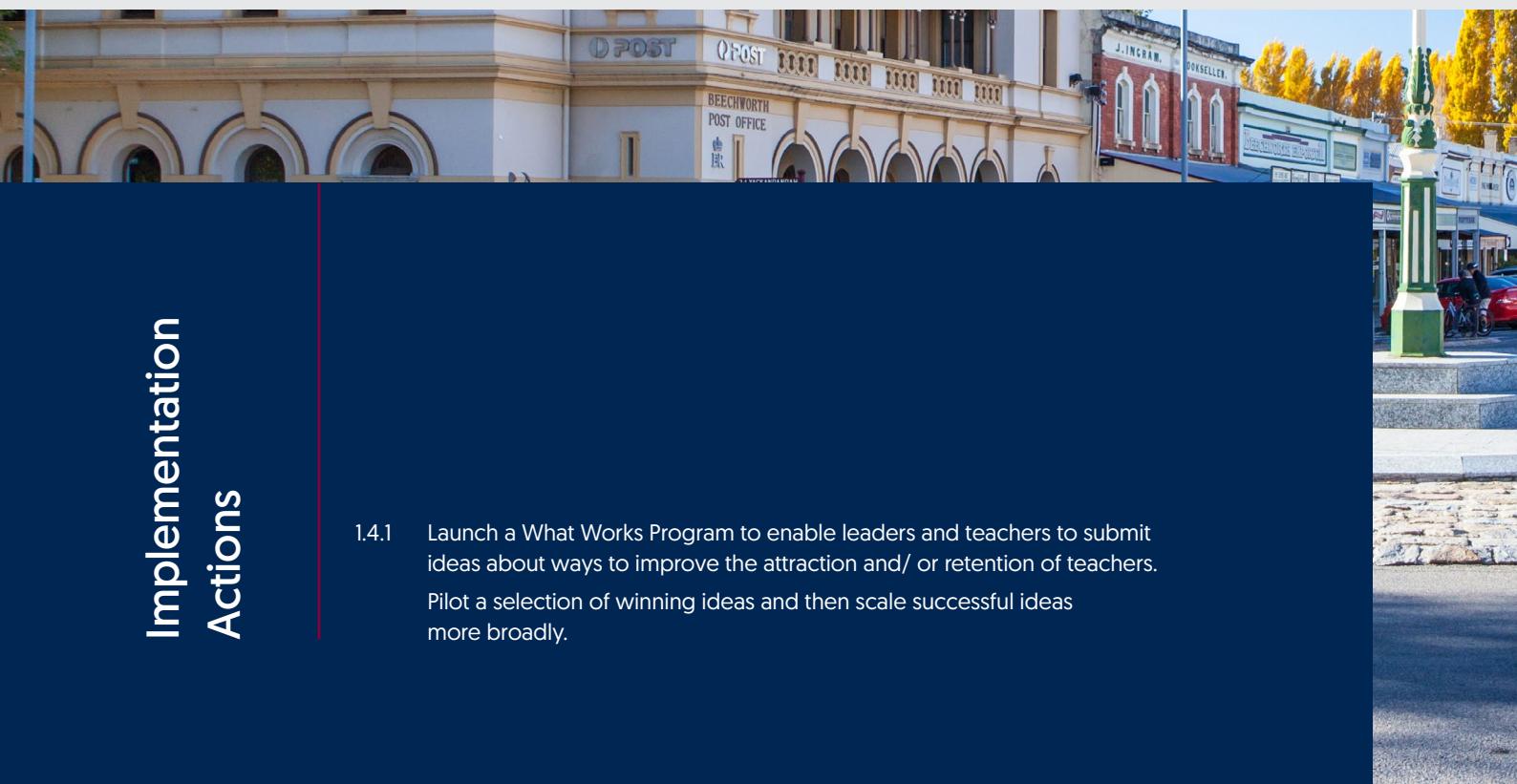
2

Building 'Rural' Understanding and Capabilities

Recommendations

1   Differential targeting and selection strategies to engage in a coordinated way with specific groups of potential staff who are most likely to go to rural and remote schools, across all entry points to the system, and aligned to specific rural and remote teaching pathways.

2   Increase teacher supply through scholarships and broadening entry pathways.

3   Partner with universities to increase teacher supply, preparation and experience in rural and remote areas.

4   Increase opportunities for rural and remote experience.

5   Address barriers to teachers in rural and remote areas accessing ongoing professional development.

6   Strengthen the rural leadership career pathway.

7   Support connection and embedment of teachers within their communities

This review thoroughly considered the many factors that may be relevant to a teacher's decision to engage in a rural or remote career. It concluded that there are distinct contextual, pedagogical and social factors required to attract and retain staff in rural and remote areas.

These distinct factors should be considered from the initial point of deciding whether or not to study teaching through to university, entry into the profession and when undertaking rural experience, in order to ensure staff feel prepared and supported.

Initiatives proposed in this section are complementary and add evidence-based specificity on the implementation mechanisms required to effectively deliver the commitments of the following two key reform programs:

- The NSW Rural and Remote Education Strategy 2021–2024, which aims to ensure schools in rural and remote communities have a full complement of staff with the right skills to deliver the curriculum.
- The Teacher Supply Strategy 2021–31, which includes a suite of activities to grow overall supply of teachers, encourage more teachers to train in high-need and specialist areas, and strengthen the supply of quality teachers in regional communities.

2.1

Develop and utilise differential targeting and selection strategies to engage with specific groups of potential staff who are most likely to go to rural and remote schools across all entry points to the system and aligned to a specific rural and remote teaching pathway.

Problem Analysis

Current efforts to recruit staff for rural and remote schools are not systematic. They are predominantly either reactive and bespoke mechanisms for specific locations at specific entry points to the system or are broad and minimally differentiated.

While the Department has taken initial steps to improve candidate selection for rural and remote scholarships and initial approval to teach, this selection methodology is not applied across any other entry point to the rural and remote pathway.

Solution

Proactively target and engage defined, priority segments earlier in a systematic way using differentiated strategies to encourage them to follow a rural or remote career pathway. Design and implement a simple, single, evidence-based tool that can support more effective candidate selection, placement and tailored support mechanisms at all entry points into the rural and remote career pathway.

Discussion

Segmentation enables improved identification of groups and their shared characteristics. Using data relating to relocations, age and promotions, an initial age and gender-based segmentation was conducted for this review. The following table summarises relocations by choice (i.e. excluding movements due to school closures).

Table 1: Relocations by choice (i.e. excluding closed schools).

Age (years)	MC->MC	MC->IR	IR->IR	IR->MC	Rural->MC	Rural->IR	MC->Rural	IR->Rural	Rural->Rural	Total Moves
20−25	1033	69	122	105	155	205	41	61	225	2016
26−29	3500	310	312	283	411	577	136	135	459	6123
30−34	5236	533	633	358	335	562	151	158	393	8359
35−39	4259	414	586	290	163	349	98	107	292	6558
40−44	3315	277	484	194	106	221	73	89	231	4990
44−49	2293	182	391	140	74	157	46	57	160	3500
50−59	1843	176	378	135	57	107	60	70	161	2987
> 60	215	8	56	8	7	18	9	4	20	345
Total	21694	1969	2962	1513	1308	2196	614	681	1941	34878

Note: MC is major city, IR is inner regional, rural includes outer regional, remote and very remote ASGS.

Implementation Actions

2.1.1 Construct a specific annual process involving principals in order to identify and invite appropriate final-year students at rural and remote schools to apply for the teach.Rural scholarship.

2.1.2 Introduce more detailed profiles and updated differential targeting strategies for teachers in metropolitan and inner-regional areas who are in their late 20s and early 30s and have traits more likely to result in a successful rural placement. Use these as the basis for more proactive targeting to fill rural and remote vacancies.

2.1.3 Introduce more detailed profiles and updated differential targeting strategies (in particular, using qualitative analysis of social and career needs) of experienced teachers in metropolitan and inner-regional areas who are aged 40 and above and have traits that are likely to result in them having a successful rural placement. Use these as the basis for more proactive targeting of teachers to fill rural and remote vacancies.

2.1.4 Ensure the proactive targeting mechanism is kept live and relevant through ongoing refinement and updating of teacher target profiles for rural and remote areas and monitor the ongoing efficacy of these targeting mechanisms.

There is a clear pattern of teachers who move to rural areas tending to come from other rural areas, followed by almost equal inputs from metro and inner regional.

Deeper analysis by gender shows a proportionately larger number of males from metropolitan [202] and inner regional areas [216] moved to rural areas compared with the number of females from metropolitan [412] and inner regional areas [465]. Overall, males comprise roughly a quarter of the teaching cohort.

Academic evidence supports the segmentation finding regarding targeting people currently in rural and remote areas, as people who are more familiar with rural and remote communities are more likely to be interested in working in those communities. Some evidence also suggests that these groups are also more likely to have better retention rates. For this reason, two segments to target include **students and non-teaching staff currently living in rural and remote communities** and **students studying teaching at regional universities.**

Additionally, to increase teacher supply to rural areas, the initial segmentation suggests targeting staff **in their late 20s and early 30s from metro and inner regional areas.**

The findings of segmentation align with findings in the academic literature that more experienced staff are less likely to move to rural and remote areas than their younger colleagues. The Department currently offers an 'Experienced Teacher Benefit' as a financial incentive to attract experienced teachers to rural and remote schools. However, evidence shows that experienced teachers tend to be less sensitive to financial incentives. Thus, there is scope to better profile and target **experienced teachers aged 40 and above** with the factors that are more likely to incentivise them to move to a rural and remote school such as connection to community, personal leave to see family, career goals.

A systematic approach to recruitment of staff to fill vacancies in supply-challenged rural and remote schools is therefore needed. It should leverage both data and academic evidence to prioritise distinct segments; implement differential strategies for each of these segments; and thereby optimise recruitment, increase likelihood of retention and lead to a net increase to teacher supply.

Regular, more detailed segmentations supported by qualitative interviews will ensure improvements and updates to enable proactive evidence-based targeting of the above-mentioned [and/ or new] segments. Regular refinement will also ensure that the Department is continuously using and growing the evidence of what works to broaden teacher supply to these areas.

Implementation Actions

2.1.5   Work with researchers to design a simple evidence-based tool to systemically aid the selection of candidates for rural and remote placements at various points (i.e. pre-practicum, pre-scholarship, pre-placement etc.).

2.1.6   Measure and report on actual versus forecast results (e.g. actual retention) on an annual basis.

Initial attempts have been made to develop a profile to identify the types of teachers (and such attributes as their age, experience, qualifications, etc.) who are likely to be successful in the rural and remote context. For example:

- In 2018 the Department introduced the Teacher Success Profile (TSP) to set new employment standards for graduate teachers as well as applying these to scholarship candidates. The behavioural interview component includes some elements that are applicable to rural and remote requirements (for example, an assessment of resilience and emotional quotient (EQ)).
- The introduction of additional rural and remote attributes to selection criteria for the teach.Rural scholarship program.

Ensuring a sound match between the attributes of a prospective teacher and their location is key to retention. Evidence suggests there are specific traits associated with higher retention in a rural and remote context. These include, but are not limited to, empathy and good communication skills, resilience and adaptability, organisation and planning, culture and context[17], grit, commitment and resilience.[18]

For this reason, a standardised candidate-selection method for rural and remote placements should be developed and systematically applied across all entry points to the rural and remote career pathway to assess suitability. Specifically, a situation judgement tool would be useful to identify candidates with these key attributes.

It is important to clarify that this tool should be used to develop appropriate supports to enhance the effectiveness of recruitment and retention – not to entirely 'screen out' candidates if they do not have the 'perfect' combination of traits. This is particularly important considering the need to increase teacher supply to these areas.

For example, if a candidate says they would 'seek help' as their response to hypothetical scenarios outlined in the situation judgement tool, it suggests they may not be comfortable with the level of independence and resilience required to work in highly remote contexts.[19] This insight can enable School Workforce to place them in an alternative rural area where they are assured some support and supervision.

17   *Tracy Durksen and Robert M. Klassen (2018), 'The development of a situational judgement test of personal attributes for quality teaching in rural and remote Australia', Australian Educational Researcher (45), pp.255–276. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-017-0248-5*

18   *S. Mason and C. Poyatos Matas (2015) 'Teacher Attrition and Retention Research in Australia: Towards a New Theoretical Framework', Australian Journal of Teacher Education 40(11). http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n11.3*

19   *ibid.*

2.2

Increase teacher supply through scholarships and broadening entry pathways

Problem Analysis

The current teach.Rural scholarship program is an effective recruitment mechanism, but is deploying recipients mainly to regional areas rather than remote areas.[20]

Solution

Increase teacher supply through expanding the teach.Rural program and broadening eligibility.

Increase deployment of scholars to remote schools with supply challenges; for example, by working with schools to identify vacancies earlier and introducing a mechanism to ensure that teach.Rural scholars are obliged to fill priority vacancies in rural and remote areas.

Introduce a complementary scheme that provides incentives for high-performing graduates in return for choosing to work in rural and remote schools.

Discussion

The teach.Rural scholarship is the most generous scholarship offered by Department.[21] Sixty scholarships are offered each year, aimed at both secondary students in their final year of school and current university students who want to study teaching.

Scholars are required to undertake a rural practicum and, post-completion, to work in a rural and remote school for at least three years.

As an incentive mechanism, the research shows that scholarships have 'been demonstrated as an effective recruitment strategy'.[22]

Following enhancement in 2018, demand for the scholarship is high, with the latest ratio of applications to availability being 10:1 (634 applications received for 60 scholarships available in 2021, refer below).

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20 Placement process is based on scholar deeded locations and subjects and vacancies at the time of appointment

21 Other scholarships including Teacher Education Scholarships; Teacher Education Scholarships: Aboriginal and Incentive Scholarships were out of scope for this review

22 Andrew Wallace and Colin Boylan (2007) 'Reawakening educational policy and practice in rural Australia' in E. Terry (ed.), 23rd SPERA: Collaboration for Success in Rural and Remote Education and Training, p.10, SPERA. https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/en/publications/reawakening-educational-policy-and-practice-in-rural-australia

Table 2: teach.Rural scholarships analysis.

Year	Scholarships available	Applications received	Offered	Finalised Deed of Agreement
2014	20	112	18	15
2015	50	140	46	39
2016	50	206	50	40
2017	50	215	53	42
2018	60	402	60	54
2019	60	619	60	55
2020	60	527	58	41
2021	60	634	62	50

The 2014–2019 cohort of 245 students with finalised Deeds of Agreement contained 38 people who decided to pay back the funds to the Department. Considering the overall number of scholarships awarded is small, this is a notable amount (15.5%).

In any expansion of the program it is therefore important to ensure the final number of scholarship recipients who graduate is high enough to noticeably address teacher supply challenges in rural and remote areas.

As a result of additional funding provided through the Teacher Supply Strategy, the program will offer 60 additional placements per year from 2021 to 2022; to ensure the final number of scholarship recipients who graduate is of a sufficiently high quantum to noticeably address teacher supply challenges in rural and remote areas. This will double the total placements offered to 120 per year.

Review analysis suggests considering the following further enhancements to the operation of the program:

- Increasing the placement of scholars towards supply-challenged rural and remote schools (the profile of placement is noticeably skewed towards regional areas
(e.g. 53% in outer regional) and schools with lower transfer points rather than remote (5%) or very remote areas (0%))
- expanding the targeting of the scholarship more towards those facing barriers to access and financial hardship (92% of teach.Rural recipients were planning on studying education anyway)[23]

Enhancements to teach.rural scholarships will be complemented by the 'Support for Rural Beginners' program, which will pilot co-designed ways to minimise the social isolation felt by beginning teachers who commence their career in rural and remote areas. The program is expected to be fully operational by 2024–25.

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23   *ibid.*

Implementation Actions

2.2.1   Double the number of teach.Rural scholarships awarded to leverage strong existing demand, as funded through the Teacher Supply Strategy.

One of the strengths of the teach.Rural scholarship is that the majority are being awarded to students with prior experience of living in rural areas (~71% of recipients in 2018 lived outside of a metro area for more than five years).[24]

However, stakeholder consultations identified a significantly broader workforce of community members as well as education support staff currently serving in rural and regional schools who face barriers to accessing teaching qualifications.

Scholarship eligibility should therefore be broadened to leverage these community members' skills and demonstrated commitment to these locations to encourage them to study teaching.

It is important to note that broadening this entry pathway will require ongoing analysis of entrance barriers and the addition of supports to enable degree completion for more vulnerable candidates.

A number of universities have already introduced alternative entry pathways to encourage students to study medicine and then work in rural and remote areas, so this same approach could be applied to increase teacher supply for rural and remote schools.

While we were considering the effectiveness of the teach.Rural scholarship, we considered the location of subsequent employment and value-for-money.

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24   Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2020), *Evaluation of the Rural and Remote Education Blueprint – Final Report*, DoE, cese.nsw.gov.au

Implementation Actions

2.2.2   Expand teach.Rural scholarship eligibility to include rural and remote community members, particularly members of education staff (e.g. GSEs, SASSs and NSBTSs).

Regarding location of subsequent employment: of the 94 students with finalised Deeds of Agreement from 2014 to 2016, the Department has subsequently appointed 80 to the following locations (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: ASGS and transfer points of school where teach.Rural scholars work following graduation

ASGS	Transfer Points	Total	%
Major Cities	1	1	
Major Cities Total		1	1%
Inner Regional	1	17	
	2	10	
	4	1	
	4 – Incentive School	3	
Inner Regional Total		31	39%
Outer Regional	2	23	
	6	5	
	4	9	
	4 – Incentive School	5	
Outer Regional Total		42	53%
Remote	6	2	
	8	1	
	4 – Incentive School	1	
Remote Total		4	5%
Unknown		2	2%
Grand Total		80	

The profile of placements is noticeably skewed towards regional areas (e.g. 53% in outer regional) and schools with lower transfer points, rather than remote (5%) or very remote areas (0%).

There is therefore scope to increase the placement of scholars towards supply-challenged rural and remote schools.

This will be complemented by the 'Support for Rural Beginners' program being implemented as a Teacher Supply Strategy initiative, which will pilot co-designed ways to minimise the social isolation felt by beginning teachers who commence their career in rural and remote areas. The program is expected to be fully operational by 2024–25.

In relation to value-for-money, CESE's analysis found that 92% of teach. Rural recipients were planning on studying education anyway.[25] Therefore, to both increase supply and support the principle of value-for-money, Department has scope to expand the targeting of this scholarship more towards those facing barriers to access and financial hardship.

A complementary mechanism to reward high performers could be to introduce a lower-risk model similar to New Zealand's Voluntary Bonding Scheme (VBS). Rather than funding university education at the outset, the VBS enables new teachers to pay off their student loan faster through incentive payments received for working at least three years at an isolated school. The VBS teachers receive NZ$10,500 after 3 years and NZ$3,500 p.a. for two more years if they choose to stay on.[26] By offering a similar scheme to the VBS, the Department will hold no risk of degree non-completion and can immediately start directing newly qualified teachers to areas of the state with greatest need.

Therefore, to genuinely increase teacher supply, future scholarship arrangements should progressively shift towards addressing financial hardship and broadening entry pathways, complemented by a VBS-style scheme to reward high-performing teaching graduates.

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25   ibid.
26   Teach NZ, Voluntary Bonding Scheme, www.teachnz.govt.nz/finding-a-teaching-job/voluntary-bonding-scheme/

Implementation Actions

2.2.3   Build a direct mechanism to ensure that teach.Rural scholars are obliged to fill priority vacancies in rural and remote areas.

2.2.4   Develop an ongoing longitudinal monitoring regime for scholarship recipients' career trajectories. For example the number of years spent in each ASGS combined with measurement and evaluation of the impact of the scholarships program in addressing state-wide vacancies and teacher supply in these areas. Embed this in scholarship conditions.

2.2.5   Implement a complementary funding scheme, similar to New Zealand's VBS, that boosts teacher supply to rural and remote areas by providing incentives to graduates in return for choosing to locate to rural or remote areas.

2.3

Partner with universities to increase teacher supply, preparation and experience in rural and remote areas

Problem Analysis

There is no systematic approach to preparing and encouraging undergraduate teachers to pursue a rural and remote career pathway.

Solution

Increase the number of people from rural and remote areas studying teaching.

Offer specific rural and remote school preparation courses for both undergraduate teachers and current teachers (accredited for the latter).

Increase the quality and number of opportunities available for undergraduate teachers to undertake a rural and remote practicum.

Discussion

People who live in rural and remote areas face barriers to accessing teaching qualifications. This includes current education staff (e.g. SLSOs) who may wish to transition to a teaching career, or aspiring teachers currently living in rural and remote areas who want to build their career there.

The 'Upskill School Learning and Support Officers' initiative of the Teacher Supply Strategy is aiming to add 120 new teachers by 2030–31. This is an important step in developing a more targeted approach for rural and remote schools.

There is an opportunity to identify education staff currently in supply-challenged rural and remote areas, offering a pathway to a teaching qualification (ideally while based in community) and thereby enabling them to fill priority vacancies in their area.

Traditionally, aspiring teachers living in rural and remote areas relocate to study teaching and may receive financial support to cover these costs. An alternative would be to develop university-access mechanisms based in-community. For example, the University of Calgary in Canada offers a largely online Community-Based Bachelor of Education course[27] requiring limited travel to the university for in-person attendance.

In Australia, La Trobe University – through the Commonwealth funded Nexus program – targets students from low socio-economic regional and rural areas and offers them a pathway to secondary teaching. However, entry requires a previous university degree.

Thus, there is significant scope in Australia, and NSW, to potentially apply blended (online and face-to-face) learning models that enable prospective teachers to gain their qualification cost-effectively, within their community.

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27   *Two-year community-based Bachelor of Education After-degree, University of Calgary, https://werklund.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate-programs/future-students/pathways-and-admissions/two-year-community-based-bachelor*

Implementation Actions

2.3.1 Partner with universities to implement a specific pathway for existing education staff (e.g. School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs)) to transition to teaching as a means of addressing vacancies in their area upon course completion.

2.3.2   Consider strategies to support students from rural and remote areas to undertake teacher training and obtain employment in rural and remote areas including:

Developing alternative entry pathways into pre-service training programs, and support structures for rural students that address current entry barriers.

2.3.3 Develop a program giving rural and remote students the option of completing their teaching degree while being based in their community, including a mechanism to subsequently obtain employment at government schools, ideally within or near their rural or remote community (placement mechanism).

At present, a suite of comprehensive preparatory resources does not exist. Instead, there are several out-of-date resources such as RRRTEC, QA Teacher, BRITE, 'Enhanced Teacher Training School program'.[28] Further, a keyword search of "rural" using the Department's myPL[29] identified:

- one unregistered course out of 824 courses. It was a 'Rural and Remote Preschool Strategy Conference'.
- 20 sessions out of 8034 on the platform (of which only four were registered).

The results show that the Department centrally provides limited support for the specific learning needs of rural and remote teachers. The focus seems to be on technology-related tools, some specific preschool-related support and a collection of symposium entries and locally developed resources.

Research consistently references how to teach a multi-level class; how to manage the challenges of teaching out of area (secondary); how to address attendance and student transience; how to contextualise to deliver an appropriate place-based education; how to work with the community and a number of discrete content areas specifically relevant to working effectively in rural and remote contexts.

Thus, there is a need to partner with universities to develop comprehensive rural and remote school preparatory courses that are mandatory for:

- teach.Rural scholars
- undergraduate student-teachers prior to undertaking a rural or remote practicum
- existing teachers prior to undertaking a rural or remote placement or relocation.

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28   op cit. S. Mason and C. Poyatos Matas, 'Teacher Attrition and Retention Research in Australia: Towards a New Theoretical Framework'
29   DoE staff manage professional learning via myPL. Access date: November 2020

Implementation Actions

Enhanced focus on curriculum to support successful rural placements including partnering with universities to:

2.3.4   Ensure the specific content required to enable a more successful rural placement is offered to students while they are undertaking a teaching qualification, and potentially mandatory if they choose to do a rural practicum and are a teach.Rural scholarship recipient.

2.3.5   Develop a comprehensive suite of accredited rural and remote learning modules for teachers, including (but not limited to), how to teach a multi-level class, how to teach out of area, how to engage with the community and understanding rurality.

In NSW, location selection for pre-service teacher practicums is largely left to the student. Further, first-year students are usually not encouraged to undertake rural practicums due to the higher need for supervision and duty of care. While the Teaching Standards require experience in 'different settings', only the University of Newcastle is known for actively promoting 'diverse practicums'.

'Beyond the Line' was a Department-funded initiative supported by the NSW Teachers Federation which enabled pre-service teachers to visit Moree to meet teachers and the community.

- It received good feedback and was developed into a program enabling pre-service teachers to visit a few rural and remote schools in an area over a few days.
- The program ran for over a decade, with the Department providing organisational and funding support (for example, organising buses and the visits).
- A 2006 analysis based on Charles Sturt University students who participated in Beyond the Line showed positive results, including: 'significant changes in participants' understandings of rural/remote contexts within the single week of the program; heightened awareness of the issues facing rural teachers; an almost universal desire to work in rural places after the experience, though students were realistic in their assessment of the implication of working in small rural communities'.[30]

Randomised controlled trials conducted by the Behavioural Insights Unit have confirmed that providing personalised communication from an influential messenger, loss-aversion-framed reminders, and the possibility of going with a 'buddy' increase the number of applications for rural and remote practicums.[31]

The Department introduced a program in 2019 working with a small number of universities to coordinate rural and remote practicums for pre-service teachers. An allowance of $500 per week was offered to the pre-service teachers during the practicum (varying from 4 to 10 weeks) from which accommodation costs were deducted.

30   op. cit. Andrew Wallace and Colin Boylan (2007) 'Reawakening Education Policy and Practice in Australia'

31   A.M. Jeanette Deetlefs, Jenny Chalmers, Karen Tindall, Cindy Wiryakusuma-McLeod, Sue Bennett, Iain Hay, Jacqueline Humphries, Michelle J. Eady, Lynette Cronin and Karl Rudd (2021). 'Applying behavioral insights to increase rural and remote internships: Results from two randomized controlled trials', Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, 92, 101664. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2021.101664

A Western Australian study found pre-service teachers interested in working in rural and remote areas were 'under-informed' about the reality.[32] Conversely, 'engagement with and support for pre-service teachers in rural environments appear to engender a positive attitude in graduates towards taking up a rural appointment.'[33] Practicums are thus a key strategy to manage expectations prior to moving to rural and remote areas.

A 2018 study in Australia found the strategy of providing incentives to pre-service teachers to do a rural practicum resulted in, particularly for those from metropolitan backgrounds, development of 'deficit' views after the placement, which exacerbated the existing problem of high rural staff turnover.[34] This result highlights an important consideration – practicums need to include specific elements to ensure a positive experience for participants. These include but are not limited to:

- supportive supervision
- clear and structured connection to the local community
- addressing potential isolation through providing group placements or virtual peer connection programs

There is merit in considering targeting pre-service teachers with traits that better fit rural and remote areas.

In summary, while the Department has supported a variety of practicum mechanisms and formats, there have been differing approaches to coordination, implementation, candidate supervision and integration within the community. Research shows this lack of structure can lead to disincentivising candidates – particularly those from metropolitan backgrounds who potentially develop a 'deficit' view after the placement.[35]

Hence the Department needs to partner with universities to introduce a systematic and evidence-based approach to encouraging and running practicums in supply-challenged rural and remote schools with a view to building a pipeline to staff for those schools once these student-teachers have graduated.

32   Elaine Sharplin (2002) 'Rural Retreat or Outback Hell: Expectations of rural and remote teaching', Issues in Educational Research 12.

33   Sandy Schuck, Paul F. Burke, John Buchanan, Peter Aubusson, E. Wei, Caroline Graham, and Ruth Lusty (2016) 'Attracting Teachers to Rural and Remote Areas: A report to the NSW Department of Education', Sydney, p.15

34   Hernan Cuervo and Daniela Acquaro (2018) 'Exploring metropolitan university pre-service teacher motivations and barriers to teaching in rural schools', Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 46:4, pp.384–398, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1359866X.2018.1438586

35   Ibid.
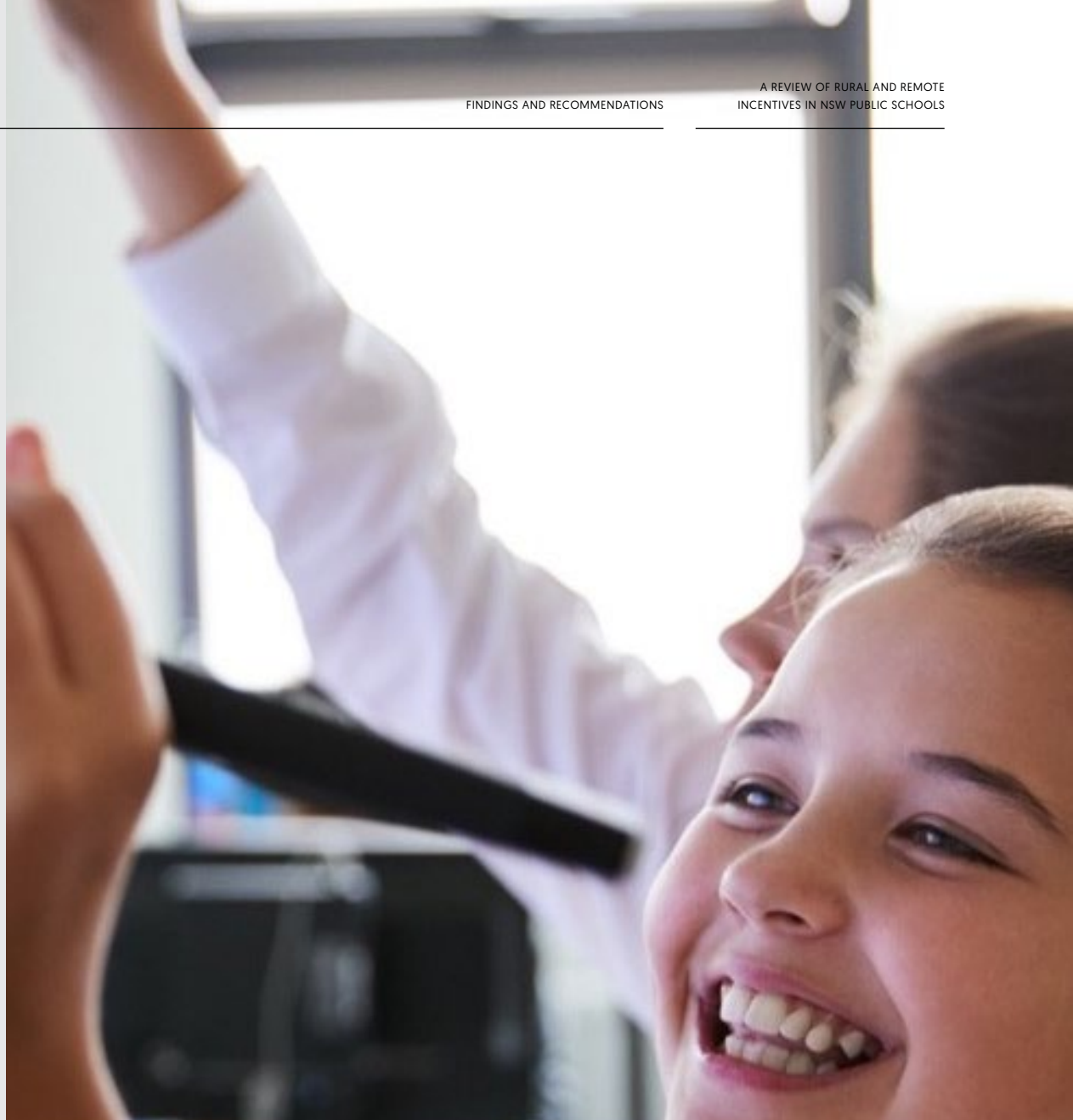
Implementation Actions

Partner with universities to strategically influence practicum placements to meet supply challenges and promote student experience by:

2.3.6   Targeting placements to areas where there is greatest need, such as vacancies. Where there is a positive fit, actively facilitate subsequent employment to those sites.

2.3.7   Utilising the standard candidate selection tool (recommended in 2.1.5) to partner with universities to proactively identify university students with appropriate traits and encourage them to undertake rural practicums.

2.3.8   Implementing a robust evaluation mechanism over the practicum program that calculates ongoing results and cost-benefits as well as post-practicum employment outcomes.

2.3.9   Centrally administering, standardising, and expanding the current rural and remote practicum program to ensure it contains evidence-based effectiveness elements, including arrangements for groups rather than just individuals. In the short term, focus on regional universities and targeting students who have had prior experience living in rural and remote areas.

2.3.10   Standardise the experience of students who undertake a rural practicum, ensuring they include a minimum set of evidence-based effective elements. Explore a similar program to Beyond the Line as a further avenue to establish familiarity, with strong evaluation and data collection.

2.4

Increase opportunities for rural and remote experience

Problem Analysis

The Department's current programs for staff to undertake a rural and remote 'experience' have low current uptake but show potential in their ability to convert that experience into longer-term recruitment to those areas.

Solution

Increase demand for the Rural Experience Program (REP) by working in partnership with principals and using the targeting profiles described earlier to strategically target and encourage suitable staff to participate.

Implement an ongoing longitudinal monitoring regime for REP participants or those who undertake the 10-week trial placement to ensure learnings rapidly influence and inform improvements to these programs.

Discussion

Quality information and, where possible, the ability to enable the applicant to visit (either face-to-face or using ICT) the remote or rural location can greatly mitigate the risk of unmet expectations, and consequent retention issues.

For this reason, research evidence consistently highlights the importance of opportunities to gain experience in rural and remote contexts. For example, it can help the individual clarify whether the opportunity is indeed aligned to their goals.

Further, it is important to demonstrate the reality of the community's socio-economic situation (e.g. access to amenities, contextual challenges) and enable the individual to better reflect on and consider their personal fit within the community, prior to deciding to move.

Rural and remote experience for existing staff is currently obtained through two mechanisms:

1. The Rural Experience Program (REP): offers a minimum one term, maximum four terms (within a school year) opportunity to teach at one of the incentive schools. It includes a living allowance of up to $500 per week and is open to full time permanent teachers currently not teaching at an incentive school.

The REP was introduced in 2018, as a replacement for the Rural Teacher Exchange Program.[36] Two of the major improvements the REP incorporated included flexibility to undertake a shorter placement and removing the requirement for it to be an exact 'exchange' between two schools. As shown in Table 4 below, the ratio of placements undertaken to advertised is just under half, showing scope to increase demand.

Table 4: Ratio of placements undertaken to advertised

Placements...	2018 (T3 & T4)	2019	2020
Advertised	71	71	81
For which applications were received	28	48	55
Offered	22	47	45
Undertaken	17	31	35
% Undertaken to advertised	24%	44%	43%

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36   CESE reported that 'The rural teacher exchange program has not had any obvious impact to date. Out of 85 expressions of interest, only two exchanges and a secondment have been made to date due to a range of logistical challenges', Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2016), The Rural and Remote Education Blueprint – Interim Monitoring & Evaluation Report, DoE, p.11, cese.nsw.gov.au

Discussion

Data analysis demonstrates the REP is a good way to deliver longer-term recruitment to these areas. Since 2018, 83 teachers have participated in the program across 62 rural and remote incentive schools. As of 22 September 2020:

- 52 teachers had completed their placements.
- 24 of them(46%) chose to continue teaching in rural or remote locations. Of these:
- 19 had temporary contracts and five had permanent contracts.
- The majority (16 out of 24) were in rural and remote incentive schools.

There is therefore substantial evidence to support a targeted approach to increasing demand for the REP, working in partnership with principals using the standardised targeting and selection tools recommended in Section 2.1 to proactively identify and encourage suitable candidates.

2. The 10-week trial placement provides teachers relocating to rural and remote schools with the option to 'trial' their appointment opportunity before confirmation. Data collected by the Department regarding the number of teachers who undertook the 10-week trial placement prior to permanent appointment reveals very low uptake of permanent appointments. Only two teachers utilised this incentive in 2019 and one teacher in 2020. All three subsequently accepted the permanent appointment. At a minimum, prior to placement at a remote or rural school, teachers require practical experience to determine their personal and professional fit. The 10-week trial placement theoretically provides this opportunity. However, it is unclear whether its low uptake was due to low awareness of the incentive or the conditions of the 'trial'. For this reason, it is suggested that this incentive be retained and a longitudinal monitoring regime is implemented to provide robust data to inform future improvements to these programs that provide teachers with opportunities to gain rural and remote experience.

Implementation Actions

As part of the Rural Experience Program administration:

2.4.1   Work directly with principals in metropolitan and inner regional areas to target suitable staff to participate in the Rural Experience Program and facilitate group placements, based on target profiles developed (recommendations 2.1.2 and 2.1.3)

2.4.2   Implement an ongoing longitudinal monitoring regime for teachers who have participated in the Rural Experience Program or completed a trial placement to assess the performance of each of these mechanisms in enabling teacher attraction and retention in rural and remote areas. Include review of cost-benefits, tenure and career path.

2.5

Address barriers to accessing ongoing professional development

Problem Analysis	While the incentive scheme offers additional professional development days, stakeholders have reported challenges arranging backfill. As a result, staff continue to face barriers to access.
Solution	Implement mechanisms to reduce the travel and relocation requirements for those in rural and remote areas to access training and professional development.
Discussion	People living in rural and remote areas face barriers to accessing professional development. This is a global issue, with teachers in rural and remote schools often having to travel to access training programs.

Addressing this challenge not only requires additional leave but also coverage of travel expenses and more complex arrangement of suitable teaching backfill to cover their teaching responsibilities while they are away.

As part of the incentives scheme, the Department offers additional professional development days to teachers to travel to access training opportunities. However, they do not collect data as to how often this benefit is used. Further, stakeholder consultations have raised issues in arranging suitable backfill to cover these leave arrangements.

A number of mechanisms could be used to address this issue.
For example:

- Queensland established regional training centres specifically to try and combat this challenge and reduce the overall travel requirements.
- Gamification examples from the US could be drawn on to enable ongoing professional development for teachers already in rural and remote contexts to be implemented in more engaging ways than the traditional webinar form.
- Utilise remote observation technologies. For example, the University of Wollongong has developed a technology resource to enable remote observation and feedback of teacher practice. This could be leveraged in situations where face-to-face supervision is a barrier – particularly key in ensuring changes in practice have occurred following attendance at training.

Implementation Actions

Increase opportunities to access training and professional developing including:

2.5.1   By implementing mechanisms to reduce the travel and relocation requirements for those in rural and remote areas so they can access training and professional development opportunities, including implementing regional training hubs where practical.

2.6

Strengthen the rural leadership career pathway

Problem Analysis

Principals require additional support and preparation to manage the unique challenges of rural and remote contexts.

Solution

Staff who demonstrate leadership potential in rural areas should be identified by the Department and specifically targeted and developed for leadership roles in those regions.

Discussion

'The research has highlighted that rural school leadership requires a different approach'[37] with principals needing to have skills and deep understanding in, for example, how to effectively build relationships and work within the community[38] as well as with key government services. Further, this has added value in being an effective retention strategy with 'principal preparation … linked to higher job satisfaction'.[39]

Further, data analysis demonstrates there is a distinct rural leadership cohort, i.e. a distinct non-metropolitan leadership pathway in which those most likely to be promoted to leadership positions in rural and remote areas were more likely to be from those areas, rather than metropolitan or inner regional areas.

This means it is even more critical that the Department takes a specific approach to developing the cohort of upcoming leaders in non-metropolitan locations. Staff demonstrating leadership potential in rural areas should be specifically targeted and developed for leadership roles in those regions.

A 12-month Rural and Remote Leadership Development Program was recently launched by the School Leadership Institute to specifically develop rural leaders. It is open to current and aspiring rural education leaders and includes: four seminars and periodic webinars; a mentoring program; and the preparation and submission of an inquiry project. Core topics include contextual leadership, pedagogical expertise, cultural humility, evidence-informed leadership frameworks, student-centred leadership inquiry.

The first cohort of 50 leaders commenced in October 2020 and are due to complete the program in June 2021, with the second cohort expected to commence in July 2021.

This is a step in the right direction. While this course provides a longer-term development approach, it highlights a gap in the availability of short courses.

There is a need to complement the Rural and Remote Leadership Development Program with a more broadly accessible, short, two-day, targeted rural leadership core concepts course mandatory for all principals prior to accepting a leadership position in a rural and remote school.

37   Philip Roberts and Natalie Downes (2019) 'The Rural Difference Trope: Leader perceptions on rural, regional and remote schooling difference' Leading and Managing, 25(2), p.53 https://researchprofiles.canberra.edu.au/en/publications/the-rural-difference-trope-leader-perceptions-on-rural-regional-a

38   ibid. pp.51–65

39   Aaron Drummond and Halsey, 2014, cited in Roberts and Downes (2019) p.54

Implementation Actions

Continue to enhance learning and development options to support leaders in rural and remote schools including:

2.6.1   Work with the School Leadership Institute to design a short and targeted rural leadership course to prepare principals prior to taking up a leadership role in a in rural and remote areas

2.6.2   Consider requiring mandatory completion of the above-mentioned modules prior to being placed in a rural or remote school.

2.7

Connection and embedment with community are key to retention

Problem Analysis

There is a difference between the remoteness of a school and the isolation experienced by those who teach within it. Isolation operates at both personal and professional levels. The current incentives only address isolation through the provision of additional personal leave days.

Solution

Build a structured induction program so that new staff are offered a structured approach to engaging with the community from the outset.

Discussion

Personal isolation refers to isolation from family and friends, cultural activities, recreation and leisure opportunities, and people of similar interest and values (including limited professionals in the location to associate with).

Professional isolation involves not having colleagues teaching a similar subject in a school or nearby, limited access to professional development and associated professional networking and limited access to other professionals to bring in to support their work.

Teachers and principals teaching in rural and remote schools report both personal and professional isolation. Traditional incentives, as well as the transfer-point scheme are primarily focused on compensating for personal isolation while professional isolation is not typically dealt with directly by incentives.[40]

Offering a structured approach to induction can help alleviate feelings of isolation. This ensures that at the outset of their time in a new community, the staff member is provided with a structured and supported mechanism to build linkages in the community.

Induction is currently varied, and it is left to the principal of each school to manage. This is contributes to information mismatches regarding incentives, entitlements, inequity and varied experiences of relocation.

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40   Natalie Downes and Philip Roberts, 2018; Tanya Ovendon-Hope and Rowena Passy, 'Educational Isolation: A challenges for schools in England' [2019] www.marjon.ac.uk/educational-isolation/Education-Isolation-Report.pdf

Implementation Actions

Build connection between new recruits and rural and remote areas by:

2.7.1   Establishing a clear and standardised induction program for teachers which includes key information from the head office of the Department, run by the Principal of the school and their DEL with a local-focus on community engagement.

2.7.2   DELs to provide direct follow-up support to principals regarding how to engage with the community and other government agencies.

3

Developing rural and remote communities and connection of staff to those communities to ensure better retention and satisfaction

Recommendations

1   Attract the range of professionals required to deliver services in rural and remote communities with a coordinated, multi-agency approach.

2   Modify the approach to 'relocation' to better consider the 'family' rather than solely individuals.

Attracting and retaining sufficient professionals to rural and remote areas is an issue faced in other areas besides the education sector. Just 13.8% of the Australian population live outside urban areas, down from 15% in 2018.[41]

Throughout the OECD, the attractiveness of rural and remote areas to professionals across many fields is waning because they desire access to the amenities and 'modern lifestyle' offered by larger cities.

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41   *The World Bank (2018) 'Rural population (% of total population) Australia', https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL. ZS?locations=AU*

3.1

Attracting the range of professionals required to deliver services in rural and remote communities requires a coordinated, multi-agency approach

The provision of staff in rural communities is a challenge for all professions, creating a vicious cycle that restricts the breadth and quality of services and amenities available. The evidence points to a general perception of rural decline, and a lack of willingness on the part of city residents to relocate to rural and remote areas beyond a select few locations.

There is no single solution to resolving teacher supply shortages in rural and remote areas. Multiple initiatives that each bring incremental improvements must be used to ensure an overall positive impact.

In the context of rural and remote environments, schools can be considered a central hub for bringing the community and other services together.[42]

One of the key limitations identified in the current incentive scheme is that it doesn't address key external retention factors such as access to services, reliable technology and cultural activities. [43]

The range of factors driving attraction and retention focused on local amenity and community, suggests that a more strategic approach is required to address the socio-economic challenges that make these placements harder to staff.

The review recommends exploring opportunities for a multi-agency whole-of-government and community approach that brings together broader policy responses to improve rural and remote communities.[44]

For example, building teacher supply in rural and remote areas could include working with the Federal Government to increase access to qualified teachers from overseas via a fast-track pathway to residency.

There has been a long history of teacher immigration in Australia. Until the 1970s the majority of overseas teachers came from English-speaking countries such as the UK and Ireland, the US and Canada. More recently they have come from non-English speaking countries in Asia and Africa.[45]

The latest research[46] shows that 82% of the Australian teaching workforce were born in Australia, with 89% born in a Commonwealth country (including those born in Australia), with the UK, New Zealand, South Africa and India the most common overseas countries of birth. Those who classify their heritage as Australian or north-west European comprise about 71% of the population but 82% of the teaching workforce.

There is significant under-representation of people across all Asian heritage backgrounds as well as North African and Middle Eastern heritage backgrounds. Notably, only 1.3% of the workforce identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, compared to 3.5% of the population.[47]

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42   *Making it Work: A framework for remote rural workforce stability (2018); https://rrmakingitwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Making-it-Work-Framework-for-Remote-Rural-Workforce-Stability.pdf*

43   *Philip Roberts (2016) Place, Rural Education and Social Justice: A study of rural teaching and curriculum politics, Charles Sturt University. Retrieved from: https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/en/publications/place-rural-education-and-social-justice-a-study-of-rural-teachin-3*

44   *John Halsey (2018) 'Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education: Final report', Flinders University, Federal Department of Education and Training.*

45   *Jock Collins and Carol Reid (2012) 'Immigrant Teachers in Australia', Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Journal 4(2) pp.38–61.*

46   *Mike Willett, Daniel Segal and Will Walford (2014) National Teaching Workforce Dataset: Data Analysis Report 2014. Retrieved from https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ntwd_data_analysis_report.pdf*

47   *Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2018). 4221.0 – Schools, Australia, 2018. Retrieved from: www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4221.02018?OpenDocument*

The main barrier to teacher immigration is English-language proficiency and the equivalency of qualifications. All teachers need to be registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority, which requires a language proficiency close to that of a native English speaker as well as an equivalent degree to Australian teachers. The only exception to the language proficiency requirements for teachers applies to people with degrees from a small number of designated English-speaking countries. Equivalent qualifications need to be of the same academic level and include at least 45 days of in-classroom experience (sometimes this is required to be undertaken prior to registration). Furthermore, secondary teaching requires subject knowledge in the discipline the person will be teaching in. Both primary and high school teachers require a familiarity with the NSW curriculum. Finally, in order to become a permanent teacher in the Department, a teacher needs to be a citizen or permanent resident of Australia.

These requirements arguably make teacher immigration extremely difficult,[48] and this has been exacerbated by the additional requirements of teacher registration. To overcome these barriers, a targeted and structured program could be developed. This would need to include an orientation to the NSW curriculum and be paid via a bonding arrangement to rural, remote and hard-to-staff schools.

There is no specific program for attracting overseas teachers similar to the Federal Government's 'visas for GPs program' which was implemented to overcome the shortage of GPs in rural locations. That program explicitly recruits trained GPs for rural areas from overseas. GPs who immigrate have a 10-year moratorium on being able to provide Medicare-covered services, which can be shortened to 5 years for more remote locations or though obtaining citizenship. Since teachers are on the Federal Government's skilled occupation list they are implicitly encouraged to immigrate. However, with no specific program such as the 'Visas for GPs program', and English-language requirements which are more exacting than for GPs in the Visas for GPs program, there is a clear gap that may be an effective – and untried – measure to recruit potential teachers to rural locations.

Aside from alternative sources of staff, there is also a need to consider and improve interstate impacts for communities that lie near state borders. For example, different training and assessment requirements hinder both employers and apprentices in places such as Broken Hill (which is serviced by providers from Victoria, NSW and South Australia).

This work will require meaningful and ongoing consultation with relevant local communities before moving to implementation.

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48   Op. cit. Jock Collins and Carol Reid (2012) 'Immigrant Teachers in Australia', Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Journal 4(2) pp.38–61.

Implementation Actions

Define and implement a multi-agency coordinated approach to:

3.1.1   Address interstate pain points such as different training and assessment requirements, which hinder both employers and apprentices in places such as Broken Hill (serviced by providers from Victoria, NSW and South Australia) and other border towns.

3.1.2   Design a single state-wide classification of rural and remote area indicators.

3.1.3   Prioritise and agree on the five communities in greatest need of development support (e.g. those with the highest vacancy issues).

3.1.4   Work with these five communities to identify and prioritise short-term priority services and/ or amenities required and medium-term development needs (e.g. housing, transport).

3.1.5   Address short and medium-term priorities that have been identified.

There is value in taking a multi-agency, locally led approach to enable all relocated professionals to better engage and build linkages with their local community. This should apply from the outset, prior to agreement to relocate, so as to ensure clear expectations and preparedness. It should extend to enabling ongoing mechanisms for professionals to be able to engage meaningfully with the community once the relocation has commenced.

Implementation Actions

A whole-of-government approach to support key workers including:

3.1.6   Develop multi-agency, key-worker collective inductions where teachers are able to build relationships with other agencies from the outset.

3.1.7   Facilitate activities and other programs for new members who relocate to the community to build connections and better understand community needs and dynamics.

3.2

Modify the approach to 'relocation' to consider the 'family' more rather than the individual teacher

Currently, incentives target the teacher, without focusing attention on the teacher's partner and family. This makes relocation to rural and remote areas more complex for teachers who are part of a family unit.

Challenges also exist in the situation where a teacher or their partner (who is also a teacher) is the subject of an incentive transfer in or out of an 8- and/or 6-point school. Similar challenges arise if a teacher's partner is employed in an operational role within an emergency services department and is forcibly transferred to another location. Either of these scenarios can result in teachers residing separately from their partner. However, these circumstances do not guarantee a transfer on compassionate grounds, which creates a disincentive to teachers who may otherwise be motivated to work in rural and remote schools.

The above-mentioned local-level multi-agency committee should be responsible for directly improving the ease of family relocation through, for example, pathways for employment for a teacher's partner.

Implementation Actions

3.2.1   Select priority locations to pilot locally developed and implemented approaches to facilitate easier family relocation.

Commence with enabling partner employment for key workers.

Update relevant policies to provide a commitment to actively case manage opportunities for partner employment.

Department to review results of these pilots and plan to scale-up to other priority areas.

4

Ensure Access to Quality Housing

Recommendations

1	Ensure access to, and supply of quality housing, including whole-of-government mechanisms to increase housing supply, and potential market mechanisms to address localised private market failure.

2	Simplify the teacher housing application process with the teacher at the centre.

Key factors in teachers' decisions to work and remain in rural and remote communities include housing, comfort, community integration and belonging ,as well as other non-financial considerations.

While the incentives scheme includes rental subsidies, there are a range of other short- and long-term actions that could be explored to address housing for teachers in collaboration with the Teacher Housing Authority.

The quality and availability of teacher housing was consistently raised by stakeholders as being a key barrier to recruiting staff. Similarly, teachers have raised the quality, availability, condition and safety of accommodation as a key factor in their decision to accept a rural or remote placement.

The 2020 Housing Services Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Department found that the poor quality of housing was the biggest barrier to both attracting and retaining staff in rural and remote areas. Conversely, two out of three teachers stated that the rental subsidy positively influenced their decision to take a role in a rural or remote location.

With respect to the rental subsidy, CESE's 2020 evaluation[49] found that in NSW 'recipients of the rental subsidy felt it positively affected their decision to take up a position in a rural and remote area. More than half of the recipients in 2017 had taken up the subsidy to move to a more rural and remote area.'

A number of factors further raise the importance of housing in rural and remote communities. Some areas, particularly remote areas, are more susceptible to market failure in the private rental market, resulting in rapidly increasing rents and/or a reduction of available housing.

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49   *Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2020) Evaluation of the Rural and Remote Education Blueprint – Final Report, DoE, cese.nsw. gov.au*

4.1

Expand the Teacher Housing Portfolio and Maintenance Capacity

**Problem
Analysis**

The Teacher Housing portfolio is shrinking as older (less valuable) housing is sold in to fund the purchase of a smaller number of newer (more expensive) housing. Repairs and maintenance funding is insufficient to maintain current housing, which is resulting in a net ageing of the housing portfolio.

Solution

Investment in new housing and increased maintenance is required. For any given level of investment, a cohesive demand and supply analysis should be implemented within an overall portfolio strategy linked to teacher supply and other systemic initiatives.

Discussion

The Teacher Housing Authority (THA) provides housing for teachers in both incentive and non-incentive schools in non-major-city Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) locations. The THA portfolio has approximately 1300 dwellings across NSW.

Analysis of THA data provides a number of insights into utilisation and potential demand, including:

- Housing has been allocated to approximately 40% of total applicants since 2018. While it is impossible to say how many of the non-allocated applicants then went on to find a market housing solution, or how many people never made an application, this does represent a significant unmet demand.
- 58% of properties are in outer regional locations. These locations account for 82% of unsuccessful applications, with 13% for remote locations and less than 1% for very remote locations.

Teachers may be using other mechanisms to access housing, so this is not a definitive view. However, it suggests the outer regional area is the biggest area of demand. These indications of unmet demand were strongly supported by the survey evidence and stakeholder feedback received though this review.

The utilisation patterns in the current THA portfolio also provide useful insights such as:

- Occupancy across the portfolio has remained stable at 84.7% since FY14.
- However, closer analysis shows that the number of properties with high vacancy (between 7% and 50%) and very high vacancy (greater than 50% vacant) has significantly increased since FY16 (from 11% to 16%, and from 14% to 25%, respectively).
- Occupancy of properties with flexible configuration[50] is 94.1% compared with other fixed accommodation at 81.3%, suggesting that these dwellings should be considered in any stock replacement/expansion.

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50 *Flexible accommodation allows for multiple room configurations*

Discussion

The potential lost rent from underutilised properties for FY2021 is estimated at $2,428,203 per annum.[51] Given the annual THA income (excluding sale of housing stock) is approximately $8.08m, this underutilisation is material.

Consultation with THA and other stakeholders, revealed the reasons for this low and worsening utilisation are various.

The age and condition of the housing, combined with the constrained funding for repairs and maintenance, means some schools may be choosing not to use some dwellings. At current rates of repairs and maintenance, the renewal cycle for the portfolio is roughly 60 years, which is significantly longer than the age of most rental accommodation on the open market.

As the nature of towns and geographies change, some stock is in areas that may be considered unsafe or highly undesirable, to the degree that some schools may be choosing not to utilise that stock.

The factors discussed thus far can be summarised as unmet demand and portfolio utilisation. Several other portfolio-level factors further compound these challenges:

- **Reducing portfolio:** The purchase and construction of new (more expensive) properties is currently being funded through the sale of older (less valuable) properties. Currently it takes approximately three to four old properties to fund one new property.[52] This creates a net decrease in the size of the portfolio, which contrasts with long-term demand estimates.
- **High-cost locations:** Due to the rural and remote nature of the locations serviced by THA, engaging trades and other services required for maintenance and refurbishment is expensive.

While the Department is currently investing in the development of a demand model to support the planning and prioritisation of repairs and maintenance, this effort is currently in the early stages of development and is being done within existing resources. Accurate demand forecasting is key to a better informed and more strategic management of the portfolio. The THA does not currently receive the agreed forward demand modelling from the Department that it needs to proactively manage the portfolio. The demand modelling effort should be immediately prioritised.

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51   *Total Loss is calculated as the sum of the loss for each dwelling, where the value lost for each dwelling is the difference between that dwelling's annualised weekly market rent at 100% occupancy and the annualised weekly market rent at actual FY2021 occupancy %.*
52   *Summary portfolio briefing provided by THA to DoE.*

Implementation Actions

4.1.1   Expand the availability of housing in key locations through either purchase, construction or market-subsidy models, to meet current levels of demand.

4.1.2   Invest in maintenance allocation to prevent the current cycle of portfolio degradation, to the degree required to reduce the renewals timeframes from ~60 years to 30 years.

4.1.3   Establish regular reporting over vacancy and under-utilisation rates of the teacher housing portfolio. Investigate divergences as part of an active portfolio and demand-management strategy.

Establish and maintain an annual portfolio strategy by:

4.1.4   Developing an explicit geographical prioritisation for the maintenance and development of teacher housing to ensure that decisions are being made strategically across the portfolio and in line with accurate demand projections.

4.1.5   Setting benchmarks and providing published monthly reporting on key system metrics such as utilisation, maintenance timeframes and property condition. Use these metrics to drive a housing portfolio strategy to optimise the overall utilisation of housing and make overt decisions regarding under-utilised housing and efficiency at the portfolio level.

4.1.6   Prioritising and resourcing the development of the housing-demand model to rapidly and accurately inform the planning and prioritisation of the maintenance, purchase and construction of housing.

4.2

Other mechanisms for improving key-worker housing

This review has identified other key issues that should form the basis of further work by government, outside the Department, including:

- Potential market-based solutions to private rental market failure in rural and remote locations.
- Whole-of-government coordination of key-worker housing.

Detailed analysis of these is outside the scope of this review, but an overview completed here, for completeness.

Market-based solutions to private rental market failure

Over time, and through changing circumstances in a particular area, some rural and remote locations experience a level of market failure in the private rental market.

This can have an impact in rural and remote areas because the private rental market is also a key element of teacher housing, and these markets are less flexible because of their size.

Market failure can occur in two main ways. Firstly, an expansion of investment, opportunity or change in a local economy can create rapidly increasing demand, which drives rents up rapidly and/or reduces available housing stock close to zero.

Alternatively, market failure can occur when there are limited private rental properties in an area, despite there being demand for rental properties. This is more likely to occur in remote or very remote locations where the distance to trades, lack of services or lack of local investors prevents the entry of investors into the market.

While a deep and location-based review of market failures is outside the scope of this review, stakeholder feedback from THA and Department staff referred to both of the above examples.

Key to any potential solutions is the government's ability to assure a certain level of demand, over the long term in certain geographies. This would effectively be a rental guarantee.

The Department could consider a scheme similar to Defence Housing Australia, where long-term Defence employee numbers are known and housing is sourced from the private market with rental guarantees. While there are important differences and subtleties for rural and remote communities, some key factors are present that could make this a viable option.

This review suggests a potential solution would be to invest in options analysis and viability assessment for potential market-based mechanisms to address private rental market failure in remote areas, where ongoing demand for key-worker housing exists. Specifically, it would valuable to consider rental guarantee mechanisms for market landlords who provide long-term housing supply in some remote areas.

Whole-of-government coordination of key-worker housing

Similarly out-of-scope for this review, but highly relevant to teacher housing, is taking a whole-of-government perspective on key-worker housing in regional, rural and remote communities.

The NSW government has significant housing assets in regional, rural and remote communities. Currently, the utilisation and deployment of these assets is coordinated by individual agencies to service their staff.

Other agencies, such as (but not limited to) NSW Police, Health and Justice have properties and staff in many of the same areas. Those agencies also have a requirement to house and incentivise some staff in those locations.

Currently, there is no unified view of demand, asset location, coordination or strategy around these assets. Further, the administration, utilisation and maintenance of housing is all held within different agencies.

This agency-based management is a natural legacy of historical management, administrative and financial arrangements. Similarly, the complexity of building a detailed view of demand and strategic management of supply would have made it impractical.

However, technological advances and standardisation of property and ownership records, online application systems, population-level geographic forecasting and digitised asset registers all converge to allow for the possibility of clarity, transparency and optimisation across all relevant housing assets, as well as active and strategic demand management at the whole-of-portfolio level.

Further advantages of such an approach may also flow in the form of reduced duplication in process and service, increased scale efficiencies from a larger portfolio, and the ability to increase engagement between key workers from different disciplines, which can help create a sense of community that is critical to retention of rural and remote staff.

Implementation Actions

4.2.1   Government to commission options analysis and viability assessment for potential market-based mechanisms to address private rental market failure in remote areas, where ongoing demand for key-worker housing exists. Specifically, consider rental guarantees mechanisms for market landlords who provide long-term housing supply.

4.2.2   Government to consider a whole-of-government mechanism to review, coordinate and optimise key-worker housing in rural and remote areas, including a state-level view of forward demand and portfolio management. Additionally, this mechanism to interface with broader rural and remote strategies to ensure alignment.

4.3

Improve the process and information available to teachers for accommodation assistance

Problem Analysis

Currently, the system for applying for housing assistance is split into two parts. The THA owns and manages the teacher housing process, and the Department operates the rental subsidy process.

The hand-off points between the two entities are not integrated, and rely on the applicants (teachers) to deal with both, thus increasing their administrative burden.

The application information available for teachers is in different places, with no single point containing all the relevant guidance.

There is currently a lack of dedicated reporting around the performance of the various teacher housing functions, and no framework for minimum service standards.

Solution

Re-design the application process and inter-agency hand-off points to ensure that once a teacher makes and application, the teacher is the customer of a process that takes into account all options and automatically promotes the application through the THA and rental subsidy processes, without intervention required by the teacher

Consolidate information around the new process into a single, authoritative source.

Introduce minimum service levels and performance benchmarks, and report on these on a quarterly basis.

Discussion

Permanent and temporary teachers at 8-point, 6-point and 4-point incentive schools who have been unsuccessful in their application for Teacher Housing are eligible to apply for a rental subsidy.

Teachers are not permitted to apply for the rental subsidy if they have not applied for Teacher Housing. In locations where there is no Teacher Housing accommodation, and therefore no point applying, applicants are still required to first apply for Teacher Housing (which can take several weeks) before they can submit their rental subsidy application.

Applicants are required to deal with multiple touch points at different agencies when seeking housing assistance. The Teacher Housing Authority process is coordinated through the THA portal managed by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). The rental subsidy process is managed through Ed Connect within the Department.

To move from the Teacher Housing application process to the rental subsidy application process, a teacher requires a rejection letter from the Teacher Housing Authority, and the teacher then has to engage with the rental subsidy application process.

This process should be integrated so the teacher is not responsible for the transition between agencies.

While there is complementary information on the process available on both the Department and THA websites, there is no single source of authoritative information for both processes, despite the fact that, from the teacher's perspective they are part of providing the same solution.

This should be addressed through the de-commissioning of separate information points and the establishment of coordination between the agencies to ensure a single, clear information source is available.

It is also currently unclear where outstanding requests should be escalated. This may be addressed as of 1 July 2021, when SINSW will establish a support line for the escalation of issues arising from both the THA and rental subsidy process.

Shared housing

There are currently no incentives for teachers to share accommodation with other teachers. The Department does not actively promote the sharing of accommodation, despite sharing among young professionals being quite common.

Additionally, the evidence around professionals moving to rural and remote areas makes it clear that establishing networks and ties to the community is key to the retention of those professionals, with shared housing potentially providing access to a network.

Currently, the rate of teachers applying for housing and nominating their willingness to share is approximately 20%.

Teachers are able to share accommodation with anyone and are required to disclose this information to THA. However, there should be an active effort to promote the sharing of accommodation specifically with other teachers, where teachers are comfortable doing so. This will increase community and social engagement and maximise the financial effect the Department gets from subsidising or providing accommodation, without any loss to teachers.

Implementation Actions

4.3.1   Change the end-to-end application process for teacher housing accommodation and the rental subsidy to ensure teachers have a single point of contact, identified to them, in both stages of the process. Establish service levels and metrics include a dedicated escalation support function in the responsible central team (refer to recommendations under Section 5) who have oversight.

4.3.2   Create a specific explanation of the benefits to teachers of sharing THA accommodation with other teachers and ensure this is included in the specific part of the application process where teachers nominate whether they wish to share.

5 Centralised, Dedicated Support and Accountability

Recommendations

| 1 | Establish a central, consolidated team to oversee the rural and remote staffing challenges and to provide dedicated support and accountability over relevant areas of policy and delivery. |

The review found there were opportunities to improve the coordination and alignment of rural and remote incentives within centralised departmental support functions.

During the period of the review, a dedicated Regional, Rural and Remote Education unit was established. This was a critical step in establishing a centralised function to better coordinate support for these schools.

As this function begins to establish clear governance between the Executive Director, Regional, Rural and Remote Education Policy and other key areas, this will provide further clarity of accountability around supporting rural and remote schools.

5.1

Establish a central, consolidated team to deal with rural and remote staffing challenges and to provide dedicated support and accountability over relevant areas of policy and delivery.

Problem Analysis

Currently, there is no single point of coordination and accountability for rural and remote solutions in the Department.

The administration of the incentives scheme is managed by multiple areas of the Department. The data and information associated with their implementation, including interaction with policy settings, is not consistently collected or analysed.

This has resulted in the absence of a systemic, data-driven view of the overall system and its parts, including the incentive system. A coordinated set of measures and regular analysis would allow for monitoring and accountability mechanisms directed specifically over rural and remote challenges.

Solution

Establish a single unit with responsibility for overarching rural and remote strategy, centralised policy coordination and transparent monitoring and reporting. Clearly define and allocate responsibility between this unit and the area responsible for delivery of specific workforce components and implementation.

Discussion

The challenges that affect rural and remote communities are both general and community specific. The general challenges include, staff attraction and retention, service and resource availability.

However, rural and remote communities also differ greatly from one another. Individual areas have micro-economies, social and environmental differences and vast differences in context and location. Very remote areas, for example, are different from most rural communities.

The similarities demand a coordinated and cohesive set of responses to rural and remote challenges. Conversely, the differences between communities requires flexibility to understand an areas' specific challenges and provide flexible policy and supports for unique or divergent challenges.

The need for specialist knowledge, flexibility and coherence across multiple areas of policy, practice and administration calls for a specific function in the Department.

Currently, there is no area in the Department with single-point ownership and accountability for the rural and remote sub-system.

Potential consequences or risks of this current model include:

> Multiple definitions and measurements being used for rurality and remoteness, limiting analytical comparisons and evaluations.

> No single source of truth for data and analysis, with limitations in data sets and the ability to provide robust analysis and standardised monitoring.

> Differing understanding and therefore views within the organisation (including teachers and principals) around the merits of different initiatives as a whole, and the efficacy of specific incentives. No holistic view of all settings to test this against and refine.

> Long recruitment lead-times based on disparate information, difficulty coordinating policies/incentives around a given situation and lack of dedicated support. Potentially resulting in candidates accepting other roles.

> Limited performance indicators to measure attraction and retention. Limited ongoing and coordinated measurement of the overall success of incentives (cost-benefit analysis) and other key system features (broader than incentives).

> Disparate information, multiple sources and lack of clarity for users, policy makers and teachers regarding the interaction of various policies, incentives and decision-making criteria.

> A lack of cohesion between the overarching workforce objectives, the overall intent of the incentive scheme and the intent of individual incentives.

> There is minimal evaluation of individual programs or initiatives to establish efficacy of the incentive scheme or other key rural and remote assistance mechanisms.

> Organic workarounds exist which have been implemented by schools in response to inflexible or limiting policy parameters. These are harder to administer and take more time to put in place than systemic solutions.

A defined ownership and accountability structure for rural and remote issues should be clear with regard to the single accountable point for the following key elements. These are not exhaustive and in detailed design this scope may be refined:

- Implementing the recommendations of this report, including reporting on progress and establishing a specific, time-bound, program management office to ensure rapid and dedicated implementation.
- Leading and coordinating the Department's input into any whole-of-government strategies for rural and remote settings, including communication and coordination with other agencies on any agency-specific rural and remote strategies.
- Ongoing ownership of the system measurement, accountability, transparent reporting and service standards for rural and remote settings.
- For policy and practice that deals predominantly or exclusively with rural and remote settings: ownership of the design, implementation and efficacy (including transparent evaluation).
- For policy and practice that includes but is not limited to rural and remote settings: a single point of integration and coordination is needed to ensure rural and remote needs are considered based on evidence and data.

The Department's coordinated response to rural and remote needs, should include consideration of:

- This report and associated recommendations and observations
- Relevant parts of the Teacher Supply Strategy
- The Department's Rural and Remote Education Strategy
- Embedding and coordinating rural and remote issues and needs into overarching departmental reforms
- Designing and implementing specific rural and remote supports, included in the recommendations of this report and ensuring system refinement and improvement on an ongoing basis.

During the course of this review, the Department created the senior role of Executive Director, Regional, Rural & Remote Education Policy. The exact span of this role is not available at time of writing. However, this report notes that the overarching and definitive accountability structure we have outlined will need to include both this new team, and the implementation and workforce support elements, to ensure cohesion between all responsible areas.

Implementation Actions

5.1.1   Establish a single, central unit responsible for assisting with staffing challenges in rural and remote schools.

5.1.2   Establish clear governance between the policy coordination functions and key areas of service and support to the workforce, to ensure one strategic view of the rural and remote system exists.

5.1.3   A specific function be established to be responsible for program management and delivery of the recommendations in this report. This includes overall administration and coordination of the incentives scheme, including ownership, and to make full-scheme information easily accessible online as well as provide direct support and clarifications to principals and teachers.

5.1.4   A specific function be allocated to implement delivery, outcomes and financial monitoring and evaluation regime (including baseline and target metrics, longitudinal data gathering, quarterly published reporting) for this program of work.

Glossary

ANOVA:	Analysis of variance
ARIA +:	Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia
ASGS:	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
FOEI:	Family Occupation and Education Index
GSEs:	Government Sector Employees, which include school psychologists, social workers and allied health workers.
ICSEA:	Index of Community Socio-economic Disadvantage
IRSAD:	Index of Relative Socio-educational Advantage and Disadvantage
MMM:	Modified Monash Model
PhARIA:	Pharmacy Access/Remoteness Index of Australia
SAOs:	School Administrative Officers (the staff who work in administrative roles and the library)
SASS:	School Administrative and Support Staff which include SLSOs and SAOs
SLSOs:	School Learning Support Officers (formerly known as Teachers Aides)

Remoteness classification	Throughout this report we have used the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) remoteness classifications to determine remoteness. The ASGS defines the five levels of remoteness as Major Cities of Australia, inner regional Australia, outer regional Australia, Remote Australia and Very Remote Australia.
Rural and remote	For the purposes of this report, 'rural and remote' refers to regions located in the four ASGS remoteness categories of inner regional Australia, outer regional Australia, remote Australia and very remote Australia. We acknowledge that 'rural' is difficult to define, with definitions encompassing geographic definitions that can be grouped statistically, such as the ASGS, as well as social, cultural and economic definition. Social, cultural and economic definitions are generally not used in Australian public policy. As this report focuses on NSW, the categorisations are referred to as inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote.
Remoteness measurements	We have utilised the ASGS, developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to differentiate rural and remote areas in this report. The ASGS offers five categorisations: Major Cities, inner regional, outer regional, Remote and Very Remote.
Rurality	The traits of being rural. Rurality recognises that the word 'rural' is a social construction, a 'way of being' associated with non-metropolitan places.[53]
Metro-centricity	Focusing on the metropolis or large city. Metro-centricity is about privileging the values and approaches that are shaped in, and designed for, major metropolitan locations.[54]
Connected Communities schools (CCs)	A program implemented to achieve Aboriginal student educational outcomes in complex and diverse communities.
Rural and remote incentive schools list	A list of all 8-point, 6-point and selected 4-point schools categorised as rural and remote that the range of financial and non-financial incentives referenced in this report will be offered to.
Transfer priority list	A specific number of 8-point schools where teachers are able to apply for transfers after two years, instead of the standard three years.
Incentive transfer	Where a vacancy arises in a preferred school and an incentive-transfer applicant matches the required codes, the candidate is appointed as a priority appointment. During recruitment, incentive-transfer candidates are matched on subject/teaching area codes only.

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53   *Stewart Lockie and Lisa Bourke (ed) (2001) Rurality bites, Pluto Press, Sydney, pp.6–10.*
54   *Philip Roberts and Bill Green (2013) 'Researching Rural Place(s): On Social Justice and Rural Education', Qualitative Inquiry 19 (10) pp. 765–774.*

Nominated transfer	If student numbers decline and there is a need to reduce teacher numbers in the school, permanent teachers may be allocated a nominated transfer, giving them priority transfers to any location.
Service transfer	Classroom teachers who have served at least three years in their current permanent school position (or two years if they are in an incentive-transfer priority school) can apply to join the Service Transfer list. Service transfers can be appointed directly from the top of the Service Transfer list or the school can request a pool of interested candidates with the candidate at the top of the Service Transfer list guaranteed an interview.
Teaching out of field	Qualified teachers assigned to teach subjects and year levels for which they are not qualified. This includes trained teachers who teach outside their area, such as qualified science teachers who teach mathematics.
Temporary teachers	Teachers at a school for extended periods of time who work in a vacant permanent role. Temporary teaching positions are also sometimes created when student numbers have grown but a permanent position has not yet been created. Temporary teachers are usually employed in one engagement full-time for four weeks or more or in one engagement for one to four days per week for two terms or more, unless the principal / director has made the engagement a longer-term temporary engagement subject to the criteria in the Staffing Procedure for the Teaching Service in NSW Public Schools.
Casual teachers	Teachers at a school for a few days to provide relief for a teacher who is on leave.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Data Analysis

Deep dive on teacher age and tenure

The common perception of rural schools is they are hard to staff and, as a result, tend to be staffed by younger new graduates who have early promotion and leadership opportunities.

This section examines the evidence to determine if teachers in rural schools actually are a) young b) first appointment and c) all new to promotions positions and used as a stepping-stone for a job elsewhere. Only research from the year 2000 on was included in this analysis.

Notably, there is minimal actual workforce data available to inform these perceptions. Statistical information about these issues can only one be found in one large national data set– the 'Staff in Australian Schools' (SiAS) surveys conducted in 2007, 2010 and 2013, based on voluntary responses. To remedy this paucity of data, the Australian Teacher Workforce Data project is in development (Weldon, 2018).

A review of the literature indicates that research and reports that promote these perceptions of rural schools reference back to SiAS, a small number of jurisdictional reports, or are based on self-reported accounts from interviews and surveys of teachers and leaders (including the HREOC inquiry of 2000).

Problematically, the view that rural schools are hard to staff is presented, but not explained or referenced in most studies. Similarly, the perception of rural schools being overwhelmingly staffed by younger and/or newly graduated teachers is often stated as a justification for studies on rural teaching, but rarely referenced. Much of the literature about leadership in rural and remote schools is also premised on early promotions in rural areas, which are again stated but not usually referenced.

Research evidence regarding teacher age and tenure

The SiAS dataset focused on schools classified as geographically 'remote'. This study identified a higher portion of early career teachers in remote schools (23% more than the overall teacher workforce in primary school, 12% more than the overall teacher workforce in high school) and younger teachers (6 years younger on average in primary and 3 years younger on average in high school). They also tend to have teachers who have been in their school for less time and have less experience (3–5 years less) (McKenzie et al., 2014). Studies have explored staffing in Tasmania, NSW, South Australia and Western Australia.

Studies in NSW and Western Australia (noted below) focus on staffing data held by their respective Departments of Education, so they provide a more complete overview of what is happening, whereas the other studies rely upon self-reporting in survey methods, limiting the sample.

The data from NSW referenced in the R(T)EP project (Green, 2008; Green & Novak, 2008) and in Western Australia (Auditor General, 2000) both identify that younger teachers work in rural locations, with this more of an issue the more remote the school is. Notably, the data used in both these studies is now 20 years old (with R(T)EP using data up to 2002).

In one remote region of WA, 42% of teachers were under the age of 30, whereas only 7% of teachers in Perth were under the age of 30 (Auditor General, 2000). In NSW, there was a higher proportion of new teachers appointed to rural schools. This was more problematic in some areas than others, again pointing to the issue of schools being harder to staff the further you go west in NSW, though there is variation across districts (Green, 2008; Green & Novak, 2008).

Data from South Australia also identifies that there are more science teachers in the younger age bracket compared to metropolitan locations (Panizzon et al., 2009). There is, however, one study that questions these findings. Frid et al (2013; 2012), surveyed recent graduates from one university in Perth and identified that fewer younger teachers relocated to rural locations, and that there were less transfers out of non-metropolitan locations.

Research evidence regarding school leadership/ promotions

The research literature supports the idea that rural schools have younger, and less experienced principals, though there are some areas of debate. The SiAS reports indicated that school leaders tend to be on average younger than in metropolitan locations and have less experience (SiAS) [McKenzie et al., 2014]. This was supported by a survey of school principals in Tasmania that indicated that rural leaders were more likely to be in their first position as a leader and had less qualifications than their metropolitan counterparts (Ewington et al., 2008). In a report about the state of leadership in rural schools, again drawing upon a survey of leaders, Halsey identified that the mode age of respondents was 51–55 years of age (Halsey et al., 2011), and younger than may be expected in non-rural locations.

However, not all the literature is in agreement. In NSW the 'Bush Tacks' research on rural schooling (Graham & Miller (eds), 2015) explored early- and late-career leadership opportunities and found that three-quarters of participants did not feel they had accelerated leadership opportunities. Similarly, in a study by Lock (2012) in Western Australia most participants did not have an accelerated career pathway, however two participants had become principals within the first five years of their teaching careers.

Testing the common perceptions using data provided by NSW Department

The data referred to here is, to the best of our knowledge, the first reported analysis of NSW workforce data since R(T)EP in 2008 – which used data up to 2002. The analysis presented below is based upon data provided by the Department for 51,416 permanently employed NSW teachers and principals as at Oct 2020. (Note some data reports have a lower 'n' due to missing data and closed schools).

Data findings regarding teacher age and tenure

To test the differences between age and tenure and ASGS categories in NSW, we conducted a statistical analysis of ANOVA. This determines if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of groups. On face value it appears that the common conception about rural teachers being younger and with shorter tenure than metropolitan teachers are true.

There is a statistically significant difference in the mean age between the groups.

There is a statistically significant difference in the mean tenure between the groups.

Remoteness	Age			Tenure		
ASGS	Mean	Std dev.	Freq.	Mean	Std dev.	Freq.
Major cities	44.39	11.66	37,365	13.43	9.51	37,362
Inner regional	45.60	11.20	9,965	13.87	9.51	9,963
Outer regional	44.79	11.39	3,588	13.68	9.84	3,588
Remote	44.10	10.96	393	13.04	9.69	393
Very remote	43.89	11.54	88	12.08	9.16	88
Total	44.72	11.57	51,399	13.52	9.53	51,394

T1: ANOVA age and tenure

However, it is not possible from ANOVA itself to differentiate between the groups, nor to determine if the differences between groups is significant.

To test this, we performed a Tukey post hoc test. With reference to age this gives quite a different picture and questions the veracity of the age and tenure conceptions as a catch-all.

Instead, the regions being referenced become particularly important, with the inner regional category providing the most significant variance, being marginally older. This remains when we examine inner regional to major cities and to the combined category of outer regional, remote and very remote.

ASGS categories	Age Difference
Inner regional areas vs major cities	Significant
Outer regional areas vs major cities	Not significant
Remote areas vs major cities	Not significant
Very remote areas vs major cities	Not significant
Outer regional areas vs inner regional areas	Significant
Remote areas vs inner regional areas	Not significant
Very remote areas vs inner regional areas	Not significant
Remote areas vs outer regional areas	Not significant
Very remote areas vs outer regional areas	Not significant
Very remote areas vs remote areas	Not significant
Inner regional areas vs major cities	Significant
Outer regional/remote/very remote areas vs major cities	Not significant
Outer regional/remote/very remote areas vs inner regional areas	Significant

T2: Tukey post hoc age

The complicated picture remains in relation to tenure, where the only significant difference occurs between inner regional and other categories, with inner regional having marginally longer tenure.

ASGS Category	Tenure Difference
Inner regional areas vs major cities	Significant
Outer regional areas vs major cities	Not significant
Remote areas vs major cities	Not significant
Very remote areas vs major cities	Not significant
Outer regional areas vs inner regional areas	Not significant
Remote areas vs inner regional areas	Not significant
Very remote areas vs inner regional areas	Not significant
Remote areas vs outer regional areas	Not significant
Very remote areas vs outer regional areas	Not significant
Very remote areas vs remote areas	Not significant
Inner regional areas vs major cities	Significant
Outer regional/remote/very remote areas vs major cities	Not significant
Outer regional/remote/very remote areas vs inner regional areas	Not significant

T3: Tukey post hoc Tenure

Taken together these results indicate that approaches to school staffing in rural areas need to pay particular attention to the specifics of regions. This also exists in relation to the major city category that includes a diversity of schools, including 1- and 2-point schools, where major city 2-point schools may have turnover analogous to non-metropolitan schools.

Caution is necessary because this data is historical and looks back at the careers of current teachers. Further analysis should examine the experience of more recently appointed staff and include data for staff who have separated.

Anecdotal evidence suggests these results may be changing for the worse. Furthermore, they suggest there is a major concern with staffing outer regional, remote and very remote schools. Looking at the age profile it may be that there is a historic 'bubble' of staff who moved to these areas and have remained. With reference to the general ageing of the teaching workforce this may well be a major risk that needs to be tested.

The following graphs demonstrate the age and tenure profiles by ASGS.

Age histograms by ASGS

Number of teachers by age in major cities

Number of teachers by age in inner regional area

Number of teachers by age in outer regional area

Number of teachers by age in remote area

Number of teachers by age in very remote area

age_and_experience | Data updated 16/03/21

Tenure histograms by ASGS

Filters

Gender
☐ F
☐ M

Number of teachers by tenure in major cities
ASGS Region ● Major Cities

Number of teachers by tenure in inner regional area
ASGS Region ● Inner Regional

Number of teachers by tenure in outer regional area
ASGS Region ● Outer Regional

Number of teachers by tenure in remote area
ASGS Region ● Remote

Number of teachers by tenure in very remote area
ASGS Region ● Very Remote

Go back   Experience   Total Tenure   age_and_experience | Data updated 16/03/21

In summary, statistical analysis using ANOVA, followed by Tukey post hoc testing of the average age and tenure of teachers in NSW by ASGS, found no statistically significant difference in the average age and tenure between outer regional/ remote/ very remote schools versus those in major cities. That is, rural and remote schools in NSW do not tend to have a greater number of younger teachers and teachers with less experience.

However, statistical analysis did find that teachers in inner regional schools do have on average a higher age and more experience than teachers in major cities.

That rural and remote schools do not presently have a younger workforce may, however, be masked by the general ageing of the teacher workforce, and itself indicate a major future issue in filling the vacancies that will be created through retirement in these regions.

Movement

Here we examine the characteristics of teacher movement by location and school ICSEA. This tests the common conception that rural teachers have higher turnover. Note, this looks at the movement of teachers employed as at Oct 2020 throughout their career.

Movement by ASGS

The following shows the total number of filled positions in each ASGS category (as at 2020) as a reference point for the subsequent tables.

Location	Number of filled positions (2020)
Closed school	51
Major cities of Australia	37,357
Inner regional Australia	9,959
Outer regional Australia	3,570
Remote Australia	391
Very remote Australia	88
Total	51,416

T6: Total number of positions ASGS

The table below represents teachers' first and second moves by ASGS. There is a pattern in the high rate of movement within the major city category, and the significant proportion of movement to, and within, the inner regional category. While there is significant movement from outer regional, remote and very remote areas to major cities, there is greater movement from these to inner regional at the first move. This trend continues in the second move.

First move (initial appointment to first move)					
Initial appointment			First move location		
	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote
Major cities	14,820	1,325	327	64	21
Inner regional	1,017	1,714	372	28	11
Outer regional	688	11,81	966	84	8
Remote	279	342	180	64	8
Very remote	85	116	87	11	7
Second move (first move to second move)					
First move			Second move location		
	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote
Major cities	6,874	644	161	25	16
Inner regional	496	1,248	236	25	9
Outer regional	198	472	403	34	2
Remote	46	71	51	19	1
Very remote	12	14	13	3	

T7: Movement by ASGS

These images show the initial ASGS on the left, the ASGS of first move (for those who move) in the centre, and the ASGS of second move (for those who move) on the right.

Staff who do not move are excluded from this profile.

Count by from and to
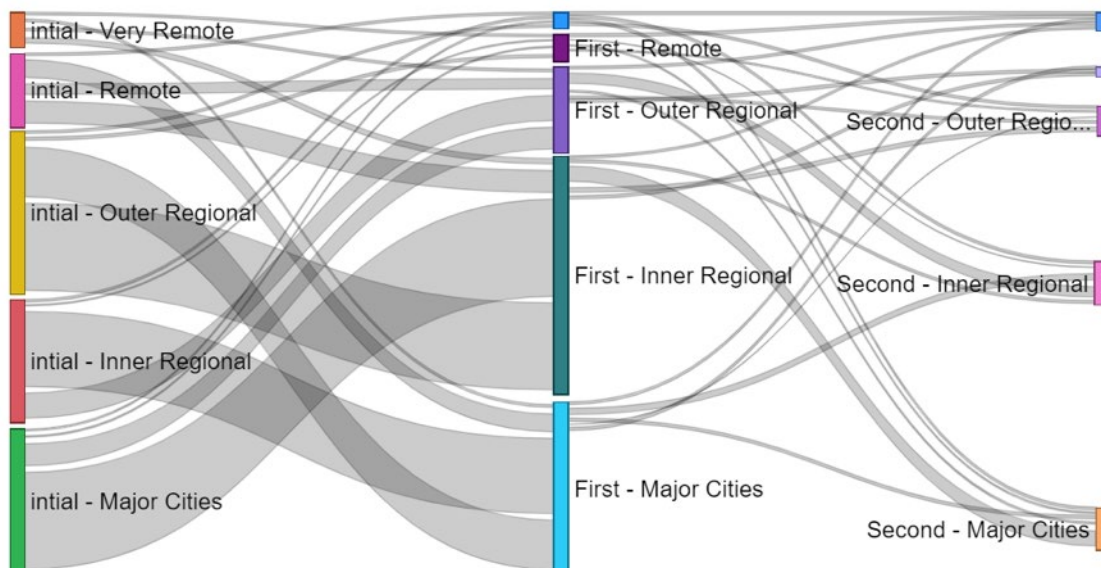
The following representation illustrates of those who move (above), how many were promoted.
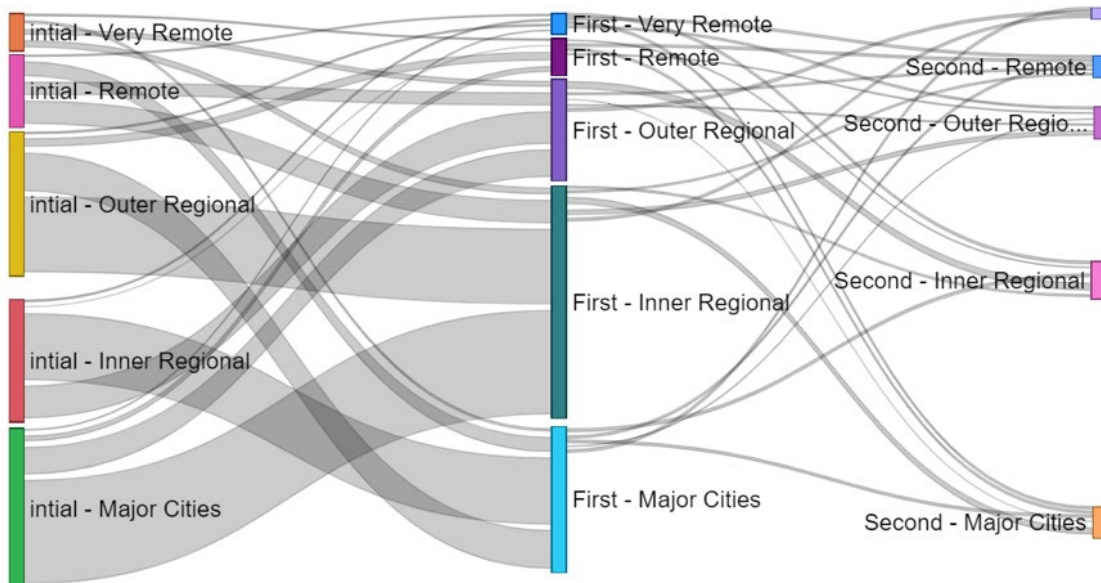
These observations suggest that teachers taking positions in the four non-metropolitan categories are not using them as a pathway back to a major city. Instead, it seems to be more likely they are using it as a pathway to an inner regional location. This would suggest that teachers who accept a position outside the major city category in the first instance have historically been more inclined to not return – consequently, one's affinity with a non-metropolitan lifestyle may be a better focus of recruitment and selection. This would include training teachers from non-metropolitan areas.

Turning to issues of age and turnover, diagram Figure 1 illustrates the average time in each ASGS category for teachers and principals' first and second moves, while Figure 2 represents their age at each of these moves.

Figure 1: Tenure to move
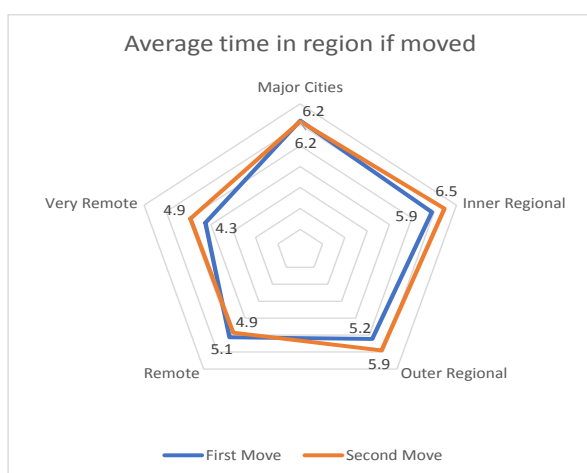
Figure 2: Age when moved
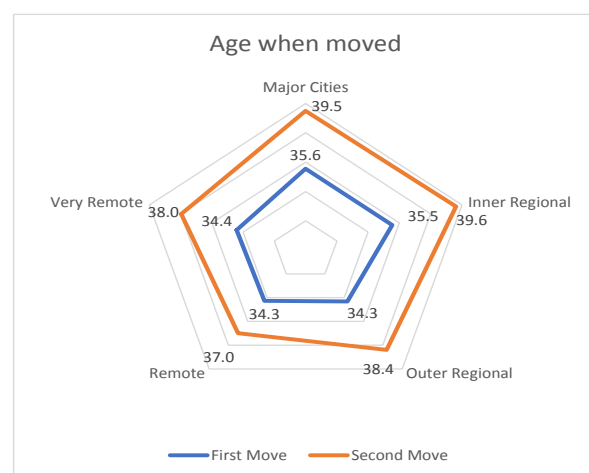
Figure 1 confirms the common conception that the more remote the school the shorter the teacher tenure to the time of movement, except for the time to their second move in major cities. This needs to be read in conjunction with the previous table, though Figures 1 and 2 only represent those teachers and principals who moved – not those who have not moved. On average, those who do move tend to be approximately a year younger in the more remote schools at their first move, and also at their second move [Figure 2], with the continued exception of the inner regional category.

School ICSEA

Below we repeat the above analysis for school ICSEA. Here all schools have been categorised in quintiles, with one being the higher ICSEA quintile [>1058 ICSEA] and 5 the lowest. We have included this analysis because it raises issues about teachers' and principals' preferred school type, regardless of location. It should be noted though that ICSEA and remoteness are associated, with remoteness being a major weighting in the calculation of ICSEA itself.

ICSEA Quintile	No. of positions [2020]
1	12,894
2	10,275
3	9,682
4	10,301
5	7,710
#N/A**	554
Grand Total	51,416

Total available position by ICSEA Quintile. Note quintiles are based on schools, not positions.

** ICSEA unavailable in CESE master data set

First move (initial appointment to first move)					
Initial appointment			First move quintile		
	1	2	3	4	5
1	1698	670	362	289	171
2	913	841	580	545	365
3	888	1,007	946	907	601
4	877	1,090	1,247	1,386	1,024
5	813	1,153	1,335	1,720	1,614
Second move (first move to second move)					
First move			Second move quintile		
1	1,109	387	195	165	117
2	470	542	374	279	242
3	342	514	453	478	308
4	338	507	545	631	525
5	202	373	464	590	585

School ICSEA at first and second moves

In the table it is noticeable that there is considerable movement at the first and second move within the top ICSEA quartile schools. Secondly, and potentially more significantly, there is considerably more movement between the lower two quartiles than from these quartiles, especially when the lower number of positions available is taken into account. This remains largely true for the second move.

Taken together, these suggest a distinct specialisation may be in operation in lower (and perhaps rural) ICSEA schools, and another in operation in higher ICSEA schools. This may be an unintended consequence of merit selection processes or influenced by the findings in relation to ASGS movement given more of these schools will be, by virtue of location, lower ICSEA schools.

Figure 3: Tenure to quintile
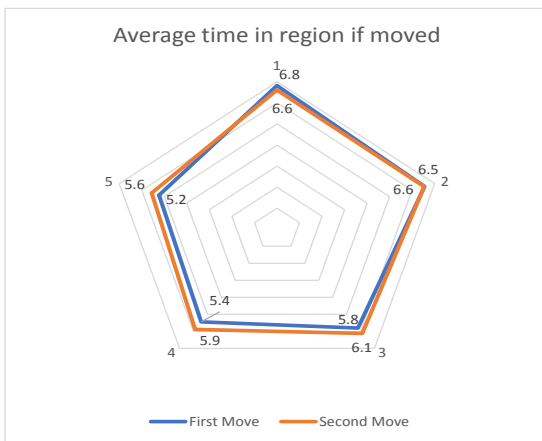
Figure 4: Age at move by quintile
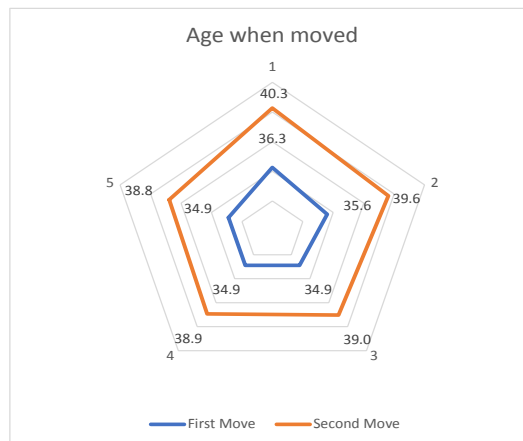
When tenure (Figure 3) and age (Figure 4) at time of movement is taken into account it becomes apparent that teachers who leave lower ICSEA schools do so after a shorter tenure, and are marginally younger, with the exception of top ICSEA schools.

Figure 5: Average experience before promotion
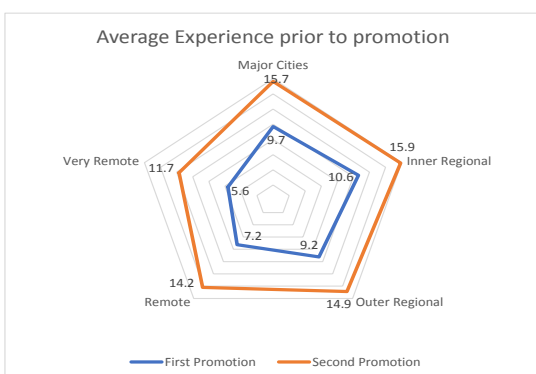
Figure 6 Average time in region before promotion
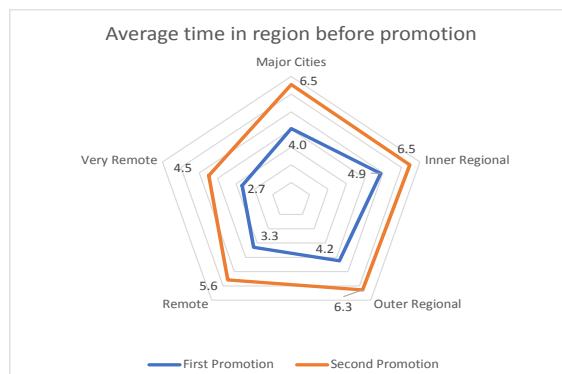
Deep dive on promotions

In this section we test the common conception that rural schools offer accelerated carer pathways, with leaders being earlier in their career.

Figures above demonstrate that the average experience at first and second promotion is less, as is the time in region before promotion. Notably the inner region difference also emerges here with first and second promotion taking longer than in the major cities category, and with teachers having more time in the region prior to first promotion than major cities.

Career pathways

Leadership positions in the four non-metropolitan categories are overwhelmingly filled by leaders from other non-metropolitan schools. Similarly, the number of metropolitan leadership positions filled by non-metropolitan leaders is quite small.

Here we look at career pathways to explore the idea that teachers use the availability of positions in rural areas, and the general challenge of filling non-metropolitan vacancies, to accelerate their career progression. A clear pattern emerges where overwhelmingly promotions positions in the major city category are filled from teachers who began in that category and had their first promotions position in that category. Similarly, teachers who began their career in outer regional, remote and very remote areas are more likely to move into leadership positions in those categories than those who did not.

The inner regional pattern is not as distinct as in the outer regional, remote, very remote and major cities category, though previous experience in this category is certainly a strong pattern.

This observation suggests a non-metropolitan leadership pathway in operation. Understanding this pathway, in order to better identify and prepare leaders, would be very important.

It cannot be discounted though that having a leadership position in a non-metropolitan school may work against merit selection to a similar or higher-level position in a metropolitan location. Such a bias has been reported previously, most notably regarding the Western Australia Rural Teacher career speciality. As such, while a specific career trajectory is evident, recognising it needs to avoid unintended consequences.

Overall, the analysis shows that two distinct promotion tracks in operation, one within major cities and one in outer regional, remote and very remote. While inner regional tends towards the more remote patten, there is a greater degree of variation here. This would suggest that promotions panels prefer previous experience in the city or the country, suggesting a difference in knowledge and experience and perhaps a barrier to mobility for promotions positions. There is certainly greater mobility for lower-level executive positions (Head Teacher and Assistant Principal) and Deputy Principal positions into the inner regional category.

As the rural leadership pathway is being further developed, it would benefit from deeper analysis of areas within major cities, the social composition of schools (ICSEA) and the full range of promotions points from classroom teacher to principal. Examining school locations in finer detail will also allow examination of local geographies around regional centres. The noted limitations in this analysis are that only permanent appointments as at Oct 2020 are included, and moves relating to closed schools are excluded, resulting in some missing data.

Now in remote and very remote

	n	Major City		Inner Regional		Outer Regional		Remote & Very Remote	
		Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo
Central school principal	10	2		4	1	3		1	9
Primary principal 1-3	1					1			1
Primary principal 4	3			1		1	1	1	2
Primary principal 5	7	5	2			4		1	4
Primary principal 6	9	2				5	1	2	8
Teaching principal 1	7					2		5	7
Teaching principal 2	1	1	1						
Principal high school 1	0								
Principal high school 2	1	1							1
Executive principal	5	1	1			1	1	3	3
Deputy principal (high school)	3	1				1		1	3
Deputy principal (primary)	4	2		1		1			3
Executive teacher (primary)	3	1		1				1	3
Asst/Princip (primary)	16	3	1	1		4		8	15
Head Teacher (high school)	35	9	1	5		9	3	12	31
HAT	0								

Now in outer regional

	n	Major city		Inner regional		Outer regional		Remote & very remote	
		Initial	1st promo	Initial	1st promo	Initial	1st promo	Initial	1st promo
Central School principal	11	1		1		5	9	4	2
Primary principal 1-3	5	1				3	4	1	1
Primary principal 4	9	1		2	3	6	6		
Primary principal 5	42	8	5	9	5	17	29	2	
Primary principal 6	47	7	1	11	3	22	42	6	1
Teaching principal 1	48	7	2	7	2	29	44	4	
Teaching principal 2	38	6	2	6	3	21	32	5	1
Principal high school 1	3	2	1			1	2		
Principal high school 2	17	2	14	5	2	5	1	5	
Executive principal	3		1	1		2	2		
Deputy principal high	35	6	2	8		18	31	3	2
Deputy principal prim	21	3		1		9	19	8	2
Executive teacher (prim)	13	2	1		1	8	11	3	
Asst/princip. (primary)	142	30	7	16	7	77	117	14	10
Head teacher (high)	171	26	5	42	9	80	149	21	8
HAT	1					1	1		

Now in inner regional

	n	Major city		Inner regional		Outer regional		Remote & very remote	
		Initial	1st promo	Initial	1st promo	Initial	1st promo	Initial	1st promo
Central school principal	7	1		2	7	2		2	
Primary principal 1-3	12	3	2	4	6	3	2	2	2
Primary principal 4	21	7	2	9	17	3	2	1	
Primary principal 5	107	43	27	35	59	22	16	6	4
Primary principal 6	30	7	4	10	22	4	3	6	1
Teaching principal 1	34	7	1	18	33	7		1	

	n	Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo
Teaching principal 2	33	9	7	14	18	8	6	2	2
Principal high school 1	12	9	3		9			3	
Principal High School 2	23	10	3	7	20	4		2	
Executive Principal	2			1	2	1			
Deputy Principal High	66	20		23	60	16	5	7	1
Deputy Principal Prim	87	38	16	31	62	8	8	8	1
Executive teacher (prim)	32	15	2	11	25	2	1	4	2
Asst/Principal (primary)	433	150	46	181	337	61	23	33	20
Head Teacher (high)	438	132	30	177	361	98	36	30	11
HAT	2			2	2				

Now in Major City

		Major city		Inner regional		Outer regional		Remote & very remote	
	n	Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo	Initial	First promo
Central school principal*	10	7	10			3			
Primary principal 1-3	94	89	92	4	2				
Primary principal 4	134	119	124	6	6	4	2	1	1
Primary principal 5	146	124	140	8	3	8	2	3	
Primary principal 6	5	4	1					1	1
Teaching principal 1	10	9	9	1			1		
Teaching principal 2	45	34	42	6	3	2		3	
Principal high school 1	48	42	48	3		2		1	
Principal high school 2	101	91	99	4	1	5	1		
Executive principal	1	1	1						
Deputy principal high	240	218	235	11	1	6	3	4	1
Deputy principal prim	655	617	646	25	5	3	3	1	

*These appear to be Central School Principals who have transferred to a major city school. An interesting pattern here is that most started in the category, had their first promotion in this category, and have returned.

Deep dive on vacancies

Supporting the emerging picture of a specific non-metropolitan and metropolitan career pathway. Referencing the vacancies as reported (from 2018 to October 2020) it is apparent that there are significantly more vacancies, as a percentage of total vacancies, in western (16.6%) and south-western Sydney (19.1%) than the often-cited western NSW (7.2%) or other non-metropolitan regions. That such vacancies exist suggest they are hard to staff in their own way and must not have been on teachers transfer preferences. There is however no pattern of note for the time to fill positions by these locations.

Vacancies by region

Region	Vacancies	% of grand total
Sydney	155	9.1%
Hunter/Central Coast	193	11.4%
North Coast	149	8.8%
Illawarra and South-East	56	3.3%
Northern Sydney	117	6.9%
Riverina	209	12.3%
Western Sydney	90	5.3%
New England	325	19.1%
South-western Sydney	122	7.2%
Western NSW	282	16.6%
Grand Total	1698	100%

This is not to diminish the significance of the vacancies in non-metropolitan areas in any way. The smaller number of vacancies recorded in the more remote locations is a significant factor such that these absences are themselves a greater proportion of positions in those regions. It also takes significantly more time to fill vacancies by location, as illustrated in the table below, even though the total number of positions is less.

Time to fill vacancies by ASGS

ASGS	Average time to fill [2018-Oct 2020]	Vacancies [Oct 2020]	Current filled positions [Oct 2020]
Major Cities	50	1161	37357
Inner Regional	53	371	9959
Outer Regional	49	129	3570
Remote	62	27	391
Very Remote	76	10	88
Missing data	71		
Closed school			51
Grand Total	51	1698	51416

Issues to consider

The ASGS and promotions data seems to suggest a specific career path in rural schools is in operation. This may be considered a sub-profession and may equally apply to lower ICSEA schools, and by their corollary high ICSEA schools.

As the Department works to further analyse the unique rural pathway, there are several areas of further research for deeper consideration, as outlined below:

Qualitative research into the motivations for teachers' movement and promotions by school location and ICSEA would greatly help in understanding the drivers of this pattern. Further, specific attention to the rural leadership pathway and its drivers would be helpful. Finally, further research needs to be conducted to determine if a rural-to-city bias in leadership merit selection exists.

Examine the personal characteristics of long-staying teachers and their personal and professional motivations.

Segmented modelling looking back is also necessary. Anecdotally we hear that staffing schools is becoming harder and will continue to remain difficult with the ageing workforce. A limitation of this analysis is it looks back at the careers of the existing workforce. By looking at teachers in the last 5-, 10- and 15-year intervals, future research will be able to ascertain if the trends of the existing workforce are changing.

Model movements should consider staff movements as a proportion of positions at the point in time. The problem at present is the base number of positions per school to compare this versus historical movement over a career. Such analysis would also need to include teacher separations in the same data.

Analyse the dynamics of staffing major city schools by location, ICSEA and transfer points. The data presented here suggests a metropolitan dynamic in operation such that the 'city' cannot be considered as one category for transfer as an incentive to take up a non-metropolitan position.

Deep dive on Incentive Transfers

While the transfer points system has been in place since 1987, analysis of employment data since 2010 confirms that incentive transfers over the last 10 years, have enabled between 1–2.1% of transfers since 2010.

Incentive Transfers

Year	Incentive Transfer	Total Positions filled	% to Total
2010	87	4945	1.8%
2011	115	5567	2.1%
2012	88	5341	1.6%
2013	99	4797	2.1%
2014	100	4671	2.1%
2015	75	4780	1.6%
2016	98	5047	1.9%
2017	90	4971	1.8%
2018	68	6489	1.0%
2019	72	6322	1.1%

The Recruitment Drivers graph overleaf details drivers of recruitment decisions over the last ten years. It is evident that advertising positions followed by the approved-to-teach list and service transfers are the current mechanisms most used in practice.

Examining just the incentive transfers that did take place by ASGS classification shows the majority are from very remote, remote and outer regional Australia. This means that the current system, while currently enabling only 1.1% of total transfers, is largely facilitating movements away from more remote areas towards inner regional and major cities rather than the other way around.

ASGS Region	Transfer To					
TRANSFER FROM	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote	% Total
MAJOR CITIES	0.59%	0.24%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.82%
INNER REGIONAL	1.18%	2.47%	0.24%	0.00%	0.00%	3.88%
OUTER REGIONAL	17.65%	24.12%	11.65%	0.47%	0.12%	54.00%
REMOTE	12.71%	11.65%	5.41%	1.53%	0.00%	31.29%
VERY REMOTE	3.76%	4.00%	2.00%	0.24%	0.00%	10.00%
% TOTAL	35.88%	42.47%	19.29%	2.24%	0.12%	100.00%

Recruitment Drivers 2010–2019

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Advertisement	1968	2441	2524	2330	2275	2434	2437	2383	3018	3021
Nominated Transfer	1101	948	859	462	309	289	342	261	414	156
Service Transfer	502	635	534	511	339	360	436	418	663	686
Employment List	749	771	768	591	691	650	739	47		
Graduate	94	119	90	346	435	432	532	481	581	484
Approved to Teach					1	4	6	846	1220	1344
Sponsored teacher				133	240	265	183	255	230	259
Aboriginal Employment	86	114	112	139	138	124	101	88	120	108
Incentive Transfer	87	115	88	99	100	75	98	90	68	72
Resumption of duty	154	147	160	96	66	53	54	1	1	2
Other	42	55		47	55	54	71	44	74	95
Targeted Recruitment Program	102	172	173	33		1				
Compassionate	60	50	33	8	12	11	19	41	70	71
RR Strategy					8	27	29	16	28	24
Scholarship				2	2	1			2	

The evidence shows that 'guaranteed' transfers are key to making this type of incentive more appealing

Transfer points are used to incentivise teachers to work in hard-to-staff locations internationally. In Australia, NSW and Queensland are the two main jurisdictions that use transfer points as an incentive mechanism to attract teachers to rural and remote schools. In addition, the Northern Territory uses a 'comparable' mechanism that guarantees a transfer to a school in a main centre after three years.

This incentive 'has been highly criticised as leading to rural teachers who may see their appointments as a pathway to a more desired placement'.1 Fundamentally, it 'provides inducements for teachers to leave the rural school. It implies a mode of thinking that suggests "a road out of here" ... not a system that actively retains a teacher in the rural school.'2

However, assessment of the incentive per se demonstrates its effectiveness as an attraction mechanism – particularly when transfer is guaranteed. For example, a discrete choice experiment involving 5911 teachers (including 125 pre-service) proposed a mix of 30 current and evidence-based proposed incentives. The highest rated incentive from this list was 'Guaranteed priority transfer after 2 years of service'. The only group that was not sensitive to this incentive was high-commitment, high-intention teachers3.

Secondly, while offering an attraction incentive, transfer points deliver a retention disincentive. To combat the contradictory impacts of this incentive, QLD has attempted a more nuanced approach to try to improve retention – for example, trying to ensure that groups of teachers who have a pre-existing connection (e.g. they may have studied together) together for a placement. Further, once the teacher has relocated, other internal (e.g. life goals, personality traits, family and friends) or external factors (access to amenities, contextual challenges) impact their decision regarding how long to stay. Thus, complementary retention incentives are required to support transfer points as an attraction incentive.

Data analysis of the 2019 rural and remote practicum placement program

The Department introduced a program in 2019 working with a small number of universities to coordinate rural and remote practicums for pre-service teachers. An allowance of $500 per week is offered to the pre-service teachers during the practicum (varying from 4 to 10 weeks) – from which accommodation costs are deducted. $150,000 has been budgeted for this program for FY2020–214 and it is not included within the rural and remote incentives program.

1   Nick Kelly and Rod Fogarty (2015) 'An Integrated Approach to Attracting and Retaining Teachers in Rural and Remote Parts of Australia' Journal of Economic and Social Policy. 17. P8
2   op. cit. Andrew Wallace and Colin Boylan (2007) Reawakening Education Policy and Practice in Australia
3   Schuck, S., Burke, P. F., Buchanan, J., Aubusson, P., Wei, E., Graham, C., & Lusty, R. (2016) Attracting Teachers to Rural and Remote Areas: A report to the NSW Department of Education, New South Wales Department of Education, Sydney, Australia. P125
4   Departmental information briefing (27/10/20)

Remote practicum placement program data for 2019 and 2020[5]

	2019	2020
Number of universities that participated	6 metropolitan	4 metropolitan
Number of rural/remote practicum placements	55	29
Subsequent number employed by DoE (in 2020)	6 permanent 17 temporary 4 casual	23 have completed their placement as at 16 October of whom nine have been offered positions
Of those subsequently employed by DoE (in 2020), the number in rural and remote schools	3 temporary 1 casual	6 have accepted 2 have declined due to inability to find accommodation 1 pending interview results

The data shows this program is limited in its ability to address the issue of teacher supply to rural and remote regions regarding the scale of participants, the number of universities involved and the number of participants subsequently employed by rural and remote schools.

Further, there may be an increase in program effectiveness if students who are from rural and regional areas are targeted – bearing in mind the evidence outlined in the section above.

Lastly, the program has not been running long enough for us to determine the length of time those who have taken up rural and remote positions are ending up staying.

Data analysis of myPL show limited courses targeting the needs of rural and remote teachers

A keyword search for 'rural' yields only one unregistered online course out of 824 on the platform:

NR18719	Rural and Remote Preschool Strategy Conference

And the following 20 sessions out of 8034 on the platform (of which only four are registered – code RG):

RG05043	2019 Rural and Remote Education Conference – Innovate to Inspire (Wagga Wagga)
NR24990	Data Skills Workshop – Rural North
RG05062	2019 Rural and Remote Education Conference – Innovate to Inspire (Dubbo)
NR28094	Early Career Teacher Network – Rural North (Peel and Mooki)
NR26238	Executive Staff Professional Learning – Rural South and West
RG03341	Rural and Remote Primary STEM Adobe Connect
RG05150	2019 Rural and Remote Education Conference – Innovate to Inspire (Tamworth)
NR21939	Principal Professional Learning – Gundagai, Narrandera, Temora, Wagga Wagga and Rural South and West Networks
NR14973	Professional Learning for Rural and Remote DoE Schools – OneNote Classroom 2.0: The next instalment
NR14399	Professional learning for rural and remote DoE schools: Neuroscience- The Developing Brain
NR13876	Professional learning for rural and remote DoE schools: Online teaching and learning using Microsoft OneNote

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5   *Departmental briefing information, 19/10/2020*

RG05043	2019 Rural and Remote Education Conference – Innovate to Inspire (Wagga Wagga)
NR26181	Rural and Distance Education Staff Development Day – Semester One (2019)
NR17572	Rural and Remote Career Education Initiative
NR26667	Rural and Remote K-12 Career Education Symposium: Dubbo
NR20317	Rural and Remote Preschool Professional Learning – Session 1
NR20325	Rural and Remote Preschool Professional Learning – Session 2
NR24218	Rural Innovative Educators Network- Strategic Support
NR22390	SAP reporting for DELs and Administration Officers – Rural South and West Operational Directorate
NR22892	Tamworth Symposium: Rural and Remote Career Education K-12
NR22894	Wagga Wagga Symposium: Rural and Remote Career Education K-12

From this list it is evident that the Department provides limited central support for the specific learning needs of rural and remote teachers. The focus seems to be on technology-related tools, some specific preschool related support and then a collection of symposium entries and locally developed resources.

Appendix 2: Attraction, Retention and Disincentives

Attraction Factors

The four main self-reported reasons for moving to and teaching in rural and remote schools are: [6]

1. Ability to gain a permanent position
2. Attraction of a rural ambiance
3. Stronger sense of collegiality, and
4. Gaining experience / exposure in rural education

Younger teachers consider financial and advancement incentives to be more important than their older colleagues, along with promotion.

Additionally, much of the literature confirms that exposure to rural environments is a strong motivator for teacher attraction, both if they were brought up in a rural community or if they had attended a rural teacher education institution.

Retention factors

The factors that influence retention are more complex to both understand and deal with. Teachers respond to both internal decision factors (e.g. life goals, personality traits, family and friends) and external decision factors (access to amenities, contextual challenges) and therefore require a long-term and robust strategy with ongoing review and iteration to respond to the changing environment.[7]

The following are a set of broad areas, summarised from the literature, that provide opportunities to create a living environment where teachers can thrive. It is interesting to note that while many of the points below have a unique rural and remote requirement, for the most part they are generic opportunities that would apply to all regions.

Strong leadership: Create opportunities to recognise and reward teaching excellence. Recognise the additional intangible activities of staff and value this contribution to the community. Value the role of principals. According to White et al. (2009)[8] school leadership was the most important influence in retaining teachers.

Investment in learning and training: Investing in training of rural and remote residents in rural and remote locations for rural and remote jobs leads to successful recruitment and stability of services in these locations. These come with a level of investment that is minor compared to the high cost of workforce transience.

Reducing isolation and increasing professional development opportunities: Review what collaboration structures focused on mentoring, coaching and collaboration have worked and develop a tailored framework for the rural and remote environment. This should include specialist areas such as English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) to help improve learning outcome of disadvantaged students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.[9]

Investment in infrastructure: Investing in creating teaching environments that have the appropriate infrastructure to facilitate the best learning experience is critical to not only creating a comfortable working environment but in order to facilitate higher education requirements. This includes dedicated learning spaces, desks, chairs, heating / cooling, lighting, access to utilities and stable broadband internet connectivity.[10]

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6   Boris Handal, Kevin Watson, Peter Petocz and Margaret Maher (2018) 'Choosing to Teach in Rural and Remote Schools: The Zone of Free Movement', University of Notre Dame and Macquarie University

7   ibid.

8   Simone White, Graeme Lock, Wendy Hastings, Jo-Anne Reid, Bill Green and Maxine Claire Cooper (2009) 'Supporting beginning rural teachers: Lessons from successful schools', Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA) (Albury, Jun 28–Jul 1, 2009)

9   Fiona Haslam McKenzie (2011) 'Attracting and retaining skilled and professional staff in remote locations of Australia', Rangeland Journal (33) 4

10   Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2016) 'The Rural and Remote Education Blueprint – Interim Monitoring and evaluation report'

Recognition of unique rural and remote issues: There is a recurring discussion about how policy and program decisions made in urban settings for rural and remote communities are not practical to implement because they do not take into account unique aspects of life and work in rural and remote locations. Remote communities are also generally distinct from one another and interventions often need to be tailored to specific communities if they are to have an impact.

Inclusion of rural and remote engagement and perspectives: To truly recognise and integrate teachers into unique rural and remote environments, it is essential to engage residents and service providers from rural and remote environments to help teachers feel welcome and enable them to live as part of the community. It is important to facilitate opportunities to connect with the local community to support and guide teachers including introductions to community leadership, providing information on local cultural events and activities, etc.

It is important to note that many of the points outlined above are already implemented across schools in rural and remote areas. There is now an opportunity in NSW to identify and learn from the achievements on the ground and to create robust but flexible solutions that provide schools with the support they need to both adjust solutions accordingly as well as implement consistently and successfully.

A synthesis of evidence from the literature

Within the academic literature, Carroll et al. (2009)[11] *posited three layers of factors that incentivise an individual – i.e. attract employees to certain career opportunities. They are:*

1. Outside factors (for example the impact on their partner's employment)
2. Internal push factors (for example, emotional responses)
3. External pull factors (including alternative job offers)

Hausknecht et al. (2009)[12] propose an alternative conceptualisation of incentives, divided into factors that are within rather than outside an organisation's control. They are as follows:

1. Internal (job satisfaction, extrinsic rewards, attachment to co-workers, commitment to organisation, organisational prestige, organisational fairness, flexible work practices, advancement opportunities)
2. External (availability of services and facilities in the community, alternative jobs, employees' existing level of commitment to the organisation, location convenience)

Based on the work of Carrol et al. (2009) and Hausknecht et al. (2009), Societel has developed the customised analytical frame overleaf containing the key decision levers for incentivising teachers to relocate to a rural or remote context. At the highest level, we define personal factors and external factors as outside of the education sector's direct control, and internal factors as within the education sector's direct control.

Further, we recognise that for an incentive scheme to be truly 'effective', it needs to reach beyond strategies to 'attract' teachers and include strategies to 'retain' these teachers once they have accepted this placement.

11   M. Carroll, M, Smith, G. Oliver and Sirin Sung (2009) 'Recruitment and retention in front-line services: the case of childcare', Human Resource Management Journal, 19(1) p.59.
12   John Hausknecht, Julianne Rodda and Michael J. Howard (2009) 'Targeted employee retention: Performance-based and job-related differences in reported reasons for staying', Human Resource Management, 48, pp.269–288.

Personal Factors
- Self
  - Alignment with personal objectives
    - Career
    - Lifestyle
  - Hobbies and interests
- Others
  - Partner
    - Employment
    - Long-distance
  - Children
    - Schooling
  - Elderly parents, friends, community

Internal Factors
- Financial
  - Salary, bonus
  - Leave entitlements
  - Subsidies
    - Housing
    - Vehicle
    - Travel
- Non-Financial
  - Flexible work practices
  - Leadership & management
    - Fairness
    - Colleagues & professional connections
  - Environment
    - School 'prestige'
    - Infrastructure
    - Student needs & diversity
    - Workload & travel time
    - Resources & Technology
  - Custom schemes
    - Transfer points
  - Professional development
    - Scholarships
    - Pedagogy (advanced)
    - Opportunities and/or advancement

External Factors
- Socio-economic
  - Amenities (services, facilities)
- Competing options
  - Other schools
  - Other careers
  - Further study
- Community acceptance and openness

This frame is not designed to be exhaustive, but to showcase examples of the range and combination of levers that can be drawn upon when designing effective incentive schemes at an individual level.

In the following section we will briefly outline two evidence-based foundational elements relating to sections of our analytical frame.

Managing expectations is core to influencing the potential adverse impact of personal and external factors.

A Western Australian study found pre-service teachers who were interested in working in rural and remote areas were 'under-informed' about the reality.[13] Quality information and, where possible, the ability to enable the applicant to visit (either face-to-face or using ICT) the remote or rural location can significantly mitigate the risk of unmet expectations, and consequent retention issues, with respect to personal and external factors. For example, it can help clarify whether the opportunity is indeed aligned to the individual's goals. Further, it is important to demonstrate the reality of the community's socio-economic situation (e.g. access to amenities, contextual challenges) and enable the individual to better reflect on and consider their personal fit within the community, prior to deciding to move.

Internal factors can be significantly mitigated through quality professional development that increases preparedness.

A key element to incentivising teachers to opt for a remote or rural posting is enabling them to feel confident and adequately supported in meeting the unique needs of students and communities in these contexts.

Understanding needs and place: For example, Bartholomaeus (2006) highlights that teachers in these contexts need to know how to understand the needs in their new geography and to flexibly meet these needs – e.g. cultural competence in an Aboriginal community, or VET courses to enable local employment as per local industry, or place-specific required knowledge such as farm safety practices.[14]

In particular, transitions from school to future study and/or employment present particular nuances in remote and rural contexts for which teachers need to understand the options available to best support students – noting the evidence that the 'height' of career aspirations are usually set around middle childhood.[15] Further, remote and rural communities may present attendance challenges for students (workforces can be migratory) and thus teachers need to be able to design their program so that it can accommodate fluctuations in attendance without significant disruption to other students.

Pedagogy: 'Internationally, students from rural areas perform worse in the PISA reading test than students from cities in almost every country in the OECD. However, the remoteness gap is larger in Australia than the average of other OECD nations, and it is larger in NSW than almost any other state in Australia.'[16] CESE have highlighted the 'primary driver of the difference in outcomes ... is difference in socio-economic status'.[17] This means that teachers in remote and rural schools require the skills to adapt curriculum and assessment to enable these students from lower socio-economic communities to thrive. This is on top of needing the ability to manage multi-grade and/or subject requirements and adapt to community cultural demographics. For these reasons, advanced training in pedagogical techniques to be an effective teacher in these contexts is of great value.

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13   Elaine Sharplin (2002) 'Rural retreat or outback hell: Expectations of rural and remote teaching', Issues in Educational Research (12)
14   Federal Department of Education and Training (2018) 'Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education: Literature review', p.28,
      https://docs.education.gov.au/node/50286
15   L. Gottfredson (2002), 'Gottfredson's theory of circumscription, compromise and self-creation' in D. Brown and Associates (eds), Career choice
      and development, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.
16   CESE, 2013, 'Rural and remote education: Literature review', p.4, www.cese.nsw.gov.au/component/k2/item/42-rural-and-remote-education-
      literature-review
17   ibid. p.5

ICT: Often leveraged in remote and rural contexts, confidence and familiarity with the use of ICT not only supports the education of students but provides an opportunity for the teacher to connect with other teachers to collaborate, share and combat feelings of isolation by connecting to a community of people within their profession (M. West, 2012).[18]

Moving from individual-level incentives to systemic incentives

It is important to flag that incentive schemes do not need to be focused at the individual level. For example, partnerships with universities can be developed to incentivise remote-learning programs that enable students from within a rural or remote community to become teachers while remaining in their community the entire time. The Department can work with these universities to design seamless, geographically based pathways from school to university to employment. An existing partnership between La Trobe University and ACU National provides an interesting case study that can be built on.[19]

Another example are incentive schemes that encourage alternative sources of labour to grow the overall labour pool. These kinds of incentive schemes are worth consideration in light of the teacher shortage in this country. Two options are fast-track qualification conversion programs – enabling individuals with some existing transferable skills or experience to have quicker pathways to teach. Types of labour pools that might be considered are teaching aides, SLSOs and more broadly skilled migration pools.

Conversely, it is important to reflect on conflicting results of system-level incentives. For example, while there is evidence of its effectiveness in many jurisdictions, a 2018 study in Australia found the strategy of incentivising pre-service teachers to do a rural placement did not solve the teacher shortage problem. On the contrary, it resulted in particularly those from metropolitan backgrounds developing 'deficit' views after the placement and exacerbated the existing problem of high rural staff turnover. The authors of the study, while they acknowledge their small sample, suggest a focus on incentivising remote and rural students who are considering becoming teachers may be a more effective alternative.[20]

Disincentives and the current Incentive Scheme

There is a significant and well-documented list of disincentives for attracting teachers to rural and remote areas with Table 1 and 2 below provide a summary of the literature.

The Department has for the most part created incentives that go a long way in addressing and mitigating these financial disincentives, however there is significant opportunity to review non-financial disincentives. Recommendations to address these gaps are captured in the section Systemic Findings, Recommendations and Discussion Points of the document.

18   Mark West (2012) 'Mobile learning for teachers: Global themes', UNESCO Working paper series on mobile learning, retrieved from http://
      unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002164/216452E.pdf
19   Joanna Barbousas, 'Attracting good quality teachers to regional towns', The Land, www.theland.com.au/story/6414482/how-to-attract-good-
      teachers-to-rural-towns/
20   Op. cit. Hernan Cuervo and Daniela Acquaro (2018)

Financial

Table 1: Financial Disincentives

Disincentive	DoE Incentive
Increased cost of living (cost of fuel, food and transportation is higher in rural and remote areas as well as the need to travel long distances for medical and other services).	Locality allowance Rural teacher incentive Rental subsidy Retention benefit Experienced teacher benefit
Cost of relocation	Relocation allowance (not in scope for this review) Transferred officer's compensation scheme (not in scope for this review)

Non-financial

Table 2: Non-financial Disincentives

Disincentive	DoE Incentive
Decreased living standards (significant increase in transportation times with basic amenities sometimes several hundred kilometres away and only available for limited times).	Locality allowance
Social isolation due to being far from friends and family with communication limited by poor internet access.	Transfer points and additional personal leave. While these provide a proxy to address this disincentive, they do not address the core of the issue.
Challenging workplace (high community expectations and scrutiny as well as the inability to separate work and personal life outside of school hours)[21]	No incentive currently identified
Professional isolation and limitations in professional development due to poor infrastructure and remote locality[22] (the effort and cost of travelling long distances to development opportunities).	Professional development leave days allowance
Access to medical and other services	No incentive currently identified. Telehealth may be a broader solution but is limited by poor internet connectivity.
A lack of relief teachers to provide support	Pilot program where casual teachers are employed at 'hub schools' to provide relief to schools within a 100-kilometre radius (Casual Supplementation Program)
Rural and remote communities are often not culturally homogenous. This can make acclimatisation to these environments more challenging.	No incentive currently identified

21   Luke Baills, Sherrin Bell, Bridget Greensill and Louise Wilcox (2002) 'Bridging the gap between beginning teachers and isolated/rural communities', Education in Rural Australia, 12(1), pp.55–62

22   J.R. Halsey (2006) 'Towards a spatial "self help" map for teaching and living in a rural context, International Education Journal, 7 (4), pp.490–498

Appendix 3: Jurisdictional Scan

The following summary tables outline the key financial and non-financial incentives across Australia (excl. ACT) and New Zealand that are specifically highlighted in their incentive programs for rural and remote teachers.

Table 1: Financial Incentives highlighted specifically for rural and remote teachers

	NSW	QLD[23]	VIC[24]	WA[25]	SA[26]	NT[27]	TAS[28]	New Zealand[29]
Additional salary/ bonuses	Rural Teacher Incentive ($20–$30k pa) Experienced Teacher Benefit ($10k for up to 5 years)		$9k to $50k announced, allocated to targeted, hard-to-staff locations	Remote Teaching Service Allowance	Country Incentives Allowance for up to 5 years	Remote Incentive Allowance		Priority Teacher Supply Allowance (Primary schools NZ$1,500 p.a. Secondary and Area Schools $2500 p.a.)
Travel		Compensation Allowance or Compensation Benefit Flight Option (Indigenous community)		Travel concession		2 to 3 fares out of isolated facilities	Fares from Bass Strait Island to Melbourne three times per year (leave and medical)	
Length of stay	Retention benefit of up to $5k annually	Incentive allowance (after 5 years) or Identified Location allowance (Indigenous community)	Annual retention payments of $9k for a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 4 years			Remote Retention Payment		

23 https://researchprofiles.canberra.edu.au/en/publications/incentivising-the-profession-a-national-mapping-of-incentives-to-
24 www.education.vic.gov.au/about/careers/teacher/Pages/targeted-initiative-attract-more-teachers.aspx
    www.education.vic.gov.au/about/educationstate/Pages/rural-and-regional-educational-reform.aspx
25 www.education.wa.edu.au/benefits-and-support?redirect=%2Fcareers#teachers, https://apps.det.wa.edu.au/aab/
    www.education.wa.edu.au/remote-teaching-service
26 www.aeusa.asn.au/AEUSA/Interest_Groups/Country/Country_Incentives_and_Allowances.aspx
27 www.teachintheterritory.nt.gov.au/teaching-territory/employee-benefits
28 https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rural-and-remote-education-tasmania-5
29 www.education.govt.nz/school/people-and-employment/pay-leave-and-personal-development/#Allowances
    www.teachnz.govt.nz/finding-a-teaching-job/voluntary-bonding-scheme/
    www.novopay.govt.nz/Site/how-to/Start-of-Year/Start-of-Year-Preparation/Summary-of-Ministry-approved-allowances.aspx
    www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/school-facilities/teacher-caretaker-housing/

	NSW	QLD[23]	VIC[24]	WA[25]	SA[26]	NT[27]	TAS[28]	New Zealand[29]
Locality (QoL, cost of living)	Isolation from socio-economic goods and services allowance [including motor vehicle depreciation allowance]	Locality Allowance	Remote Allowance may be available	Locality Allowance	Locality Allowance		District Allowance	Isolation Allowance NZ$1,200–$2k p.a.
Leave	Additional 2 to 5 days Vacation travel expenses [during school holidays]	Additional discretionary leave [medical or personal] Additional vacation leave		Additional after 3 years' service	Additional 16 days per year for Aboriginal and Anangu schools	Additional up to 4 days		
Relocation	Subsidy for newly appointed teachers	Relocation assistance	May be available	Provided	Provided	Provided		Provided
Accommodation	Rental subsidy of 50–90% [deducted from RTI]	Subsidised housing		Provided	Government housing or subsidy	100% rental concession		25% rental subsidy on 'school houses'
Scholarships and/ or PD specifically for rural and remote teachers	Scholarships including teach. Rural, Rural Experience Program and PD leave	STEM Scholarship Professional Experience Scholarship Four PD centres in rural locations	VET Scholarship PD for VET teachers and STEM Not yet current: up to $5,560 per year for two years with 5 days' release		Extra study points accrual if in Aboriginal or Anangu school	Special Remote Study Leave Extra study points accrual		Voluntary Bonding Scheme NZ$3,5k p.a. for a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 5 years

	NSW	QLD[23]	VIC[24]	WA[25]	SA[26]	NT[27]	TAS[28]	New Zealand[29]
Miscellaneous financial	Recruitment bonus for hard-to-staff schools and positions [following two unsuccessful selection processes] Transferred Officer's Compensation Broken Hill Allowance [specifically for this school] Climatic allowance [for spec. schools] Medical reimbursement	Special Incentive Allowance [legacy, being phased out] Schooling costs if their children are still attending metro or provincial schools Government tax offsets	Recruitment bonus for hard-to-staff schools and positions		One-off 'incidentals' payment, accommodation and travel to access medical or dental, payments for working in Aboriginal and Anangu schools	4WD training		High Priority Principals' Allowance NZ$3k p.a. Staffing Incentive Allowance NZ$1,000 p.a.

Table 2: Non-Financial Incentives highlighted specifically for rural and remote teachers

	NSW	QLD	VIC	WA	SA	NT	TAS	New Zealand
Induction		Remote Induction Programs						
Permanency	Fast-track temporary to permanent Recognition of temporary service	Provided		After 2 years				
Transfer benefits	Transfer Points system benefits	Transfer Points system benefits				No transfer points system, but have a guaranteed transfer to main centres after three years		

National (Australia)

The Federal government offers two primary mechanisms to incentivise teachers to take up postings in rural and remote schools.

Firstly, funding for targeted supply-increase and skill-development programs

The Federal government has committed $21.2 million to fund the High Achieving Teachers Program.[30] This will specifically encourage high achievers to become teachers in regional, rural and low socio-economic schools with a focus on regional Victoria (working with La Trobe University) and STEM positions (working with Teach for Australia). One of the unique features of this program is its focus on building supply through an alternative pathway – enabling university graduates to be placed into schools while completing their qualification.[31]

In addition, $15 million has been provided to specifically develop leadership skills of principals and senior teachers in rural and regional locations through the Future Leaders Program. This is due to start pilot activities in 2021.[32]

Secondly, accessing international teacher supply through immigration policy

Australia's teacher shortage[33] is reflected in the fact that a variety of teachers and skill-levels are contained in Australia's Medium-to-Long-Term Strategic Skills list[34],[35]. This is to help attract foreign-trained teachers to apply to work and live in Australia for four years, and subsequently apply for Permanent Residency.[36]

While a major benefit of the immigration pathway is that teachers arrive both qualified and experienced, unfortunately most immigrant teachers surveyed in a 2012 study of predominantly teachers in NSW reported experiencing problems with qualification recognition and registration.[37] They further reported issues in relation to community acceptance and the perception that they would only be there for the short term.[38]

Thus, while immigration is one of the Federal Government's mechanisms to address teacher supply, it evidently requires improvements to foundational supports.

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30   Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 'What is the Australian Government doing to support students in regional and remote schools?': www.education.gov.au/what-australian-government-doing-support-students-regional-and-remote-schools
31   DoE, Skills and Employment, 'Alternative Pathways', www.education.gov.au/alternative-pathways
32   DoE, Skills and Employment, 'Teaching and School Leadership', www.education.gov.au/quality-teaching
33   DoE, Skills and Employment, 'Skill Shortages', www.employment.gov.au/skillshortages?page=2&resource=
34   Federal Register of Legislation, 'Migration (LIN 19/048: Specification of Occupations—Subclass 482 Visa) Instrument 2019', www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019L00274
35   Federal Register of Legislation, 'Migration (LIN 19/051: Specification of Occupations and Assessing Authorities) Instrument 2019', www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019L00278
36   New World Immigration, 'Australia to Recruit Foreign Teachers as Regions Face Teacher Shortages', www.nwivisas.com/nwi-blog/australia/australia-to-recruit-foreign-teachers-as-regions-face-teacher-shortages/
37   op. cit. Jock Collins, Carol Reid (2012) 'Immigrant Teachers in Australia' www.researchgate.net/publication/270015742_Immigrant_Teachers_in_Australia
38   ibid.

Canada

Canada does not have a national system or department of education – instead, education planning and delivery is entirely under provincial or territorial control.[39] Most 'remote' teaching in Canada occurs on Indigenous reserves.[40] Further, new teachers are more likely to seek early career contracts in remote northern parts of the provinces and in the northern territories for their first few years as teachers.[41] During the 1970s and 80s, community schools were often also considered social hubs.[42] However, a recent trend in remote areas (i.e. the Yukon, Nunavet and the Northwest Territories) has involved consolidation and closure of small schools, resulting in increased reliance on and structures for online distance education.[43]

Often profiled, a broader case of Canada's focus on connecting more remote communities (distinct from the structure of school delivery per se) is the Alberta 'SuperNet' – which spans 429 communities including their schools (eLearning and distance learning), hospitals (online health applications), libraries (online catalogue) and government and municipal offices (online services).[44]

Newfoundland and Labrador: Labrador is one of Canada's more remote regions with student results in literacy and numeracy below many other Canadian jurisdictions.[45] Similar to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, it has a significant Indigenous population.[46] Newfoundland and Labrador's teacher salary scales[47] reference a Labrador allowance (in 2015, between C$2939 and C$3558 single) and a Travel Allowance (in 2015, between C$911 and C$1015 single) but it is not presented as an 'incentive' per se.[48] 'Incentives' per se are only referenced as being at the discretion of school boards – for example, the Innu school board operating in the northern territory of Canada offers travel allowance, isolation allowance and a retention bonus.[49]

In the case of British Columbia there is a direct reference to a 'Remote Recruitment and Retention Allowance' of up to C$2491.65pa.[50] In general, rural schools in British Columbia receive 20% more funding per student than urban schools.[51] In 2017, it was announced that $2 million would be provided to specific districts to improve job posting services, better coordinate recruitment efforts, and enable local incentives for professional development, relocation expenses and transitional housing.[52] Note that analysis of how much money was actually allocated and for what is yet to be reported.[53]

In Ontario, rural education is supported by providing grants to students and schools that require additional support based on specific, targeted priorities.[54] The school boards can then, in the manner described above, work within their budgets to design and offer additional incentives at their discretion. However, a recent report places Indigenous students 30% behind in funding when compared to southern Ontario schools and boards.[55]

39   ISFIRE2009, International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education, Improving Equity in Rural Education, Symposium Proceedings Editors: Terry Lyons, Joon-Yul Choi, Greg McPhan, University of New England, Armidale, NSW, Australia 11-14 February 2009, https://simerr.une.edu.au/ISFIRE/pages/ISFIRE_proceedings.pdf
40   Email correspondence, Professor N. Maynes, Nipissing University, Ontario, Canada, received 12 Nov 2020
41   ibid.
42   ibid.
43   op. cit. ISFIRE2009, International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education, Improving Equity in Rural Education,
44   Alberta, 'Alberta SuperNet', www.alberta.ca/supernet.aspx
45   Newfoundland Labrador, Education Action Plan 'The Way Forward', June 2018, www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/eap-report.pdf
46   Email correspondence, Prof B Hatt, Nipissing University, Ontario, Canada, received 12 Nov 2020
47   Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Teacher Salary Scales, https://www.nlta.nl.ca/salary-scales/
48   Newfoundland Labrador, Labrador Benefits Agreement, http://files.nlta.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/public/documents/agreements/lb_benefits_agmt.pdf#page=2
49   CBC News, 'Innu students in Labrador head back to school with teacher void', 28 Aug 2019, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/innu-teacher-void-labrador-1.5262384
50   M'ake a Future, Remote Recruitment and Retention Allowance', https://www.makeafuture.ca/resources/why-work-in-bc/salary-and-benefits/remote-recruitment-and-retention-allowance/
51   BC Gov News, 'Province invests $2 million for rural teacher recruitment', https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017EDUC0041-000592
52   ibid.
53   Email correspondence, Prof B Hatt, Nipissing University, Ontario, Canada, received 12 Nov 2020
54   Ontario, 'Supporting Students and Communities', www.ontario.ca/page/supporting-students-and-communities
55   Email correspondence, Prof B. Hatt, Nipissing University, Ontario, Canada, received 12 Nov 2020

Interestingly, as highlighted by Sue Thomson, Head Researcher, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), postgraduate qualified teachers in Canada are as likely to be teaching disadvantaged students as their privileged peers. This is due to a national policy of multiculturalism as well as the mobility of the Canadian population.[56] Provincial and territorial jurisdictions in Canada subscribe to an inclusive approach to public education; therefore, there are a mixture of ability levels in each classroom. There is no segregation in public schools based on socio-economic levels. All classroom teachers are expected to be well versed in differentiated instruction strategies and techniques.[57] By contrast, in Australia teachers with postgraduate qualifications are more commonly teaching higher achievers and students from higher socio-economic backgrounds.[58]

More research is needed to determine the relative weight of this feature versus Canada's other differentiating features (e.g., a higher mix of socio-economic levels in individual schools than we see in Australian schools).

56   Email correspondence, Prof N. Maynes, Nipissing University, Ontario, Canada, received 12 Nov 2020
57   ibid.
58   T. Greenwell, 'Why do Canada's schools outperform Australia's?', Inside Story, 9 Apr 2020, https://insidestory.org.au/why-do-canadas-schools-outperform-australias/

Appendix 4: Stakeholder List

Stakeholder	Purpose
Reference Group School Workforce and People & Culture, Finance, Educational Services, Disability Strategy Implementation Team, School Operations and Performance, Staffing and Resourcing Unit, Education Futures and Governance	The reference group are an advisory group, made up of key stakeholders within the Department who have interest and/or accountability for rural and remote concerns. The reference group met on three occasions to focus on providing feedback on key deliverables: Meeting 1: to agree on the terms of reference, communicate the purpose of the review and obtain advice on possible areas and data sources for review Meeting 2: to provide feedback on the emerging findings within the Discussion Paper Meeting 3: to provide feedback on the final report At the request of members, additional meetings were scheduled with members to provide more detailed feedback.
Rural and Remote Education Strategy	Gain insight into background, inputs and status of the Rural and Remote Education Strategy and identify any inputs / data sources into the rural and remote incentive scheme review.
People data and analytics [People and Culture]	To provide the review team with data sources and to provide quality assurance of the data analysis and findings of the review.
Staffing methodology review	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any inputs from and/or interdependencies with the staffing methodology review.
Teacher Supply and Workforce Strategy [School Workforce]	To provide project management, information on departmental policies, procedures and data, as well as a liaison point for engagement with internal department stakeholders.
Directors of Education Leadership [DEL] Meeting	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Deputy Secretary Education and Skills Reform	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Griffith Principals	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme and obtain feedback on the specific challenges of the incentive scheme within the Griffith and Leeton areas.
Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation [CESE]	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.
Innovation and System Design, Transformation Directorate	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.
West Principals Network	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and obtain feedback on the specific challenges of the incentive scheme in the West Principals Network.
Schools Digital Strategy	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive School including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Director Educational Leadership, Connected Communities	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Deputy Secretary School Performance North	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Deputy Secretary School Performance South	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Financial Analysis and Partnership	Finance	To obtain validation of the data sources used for the Rural and Remote Incentive Review
Executive Director, Connected Communities	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Review including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Data Services Information Technology Directorate	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.

NSW Teachers Federation	To obtain feedback on the themes and findings of the Discussion Paper into the rural and remote incentive scheme and any additional challenges and themes not identified within the Discussion Paper.
Primary Principals Association	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Secondary Schools Council	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Isolated Children's Parents Association	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Aboriginal Education Consultative Group	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Public Service Association of NSW	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Special Education Principals' and Leaders' Association	To obtain feedback on the Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme including opportunities to improve the scheme.
Department of Education, Chief Financial Officer	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.
Senior Advisor, Workforce Reporting Workforce Planning and Reporting	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.
Lead, Workforce Reporting	People Data and Analytics	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.
Principal Finance Officer	Financial Analysis and Partnership	To provide an overview of the rural and remote incentive review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.
Education Housing	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.
Teacher Housing Authority	To provide an overview of the Rural and Remote Incentive Review and identify any additional data sources for analysis and review.

Appendix 5: Incentive Matrix

Incentives	Value of incentive (if applicable)	The nature of the incentive	How it works (in brief)	Eligible positions/people	Eligibility requirements	4-pt	6-pt	8-pt	CC School	Perms [y/n]	Temps [y/n]	NSBTS staff [y/n]
Rental Subsidy/ Teacher Housing Authority (THA) accommodation	50–90% of rental expense for both THA accommodation and private rental	The DoE provides rental subsidies to teachers in 8-, 6- and 4-point incentive schools who are either living in THA accommodation or who are eligible for THA accommodation but have been unsuccessful in obtaining that accommodation and need to rent privately.	Eligible teachers first need to apply for THA accommodation. If no THA accommodation is available they can then apply for the rental subsidy. Rental subsidies are deducted out of the Rural Teacher Incentive payment.	Permanent, temporary and some NSBTS staff: NSBTS staff at the state offices at Bourke, Broken Hill, Deniliquin and Moree are eligible to receive a rental subsidy as part of the Rural NSBTS Incentive.	Must first apply for THA accommodation, if not available can then apply for the rental subsidy if an incentive school.	50%	70%	90%	Y	Y	Y	Y (eligible locations) – see Rural NSBTS Incentive Procedure
Retention Benefit	$5k p.a. for up to 10 years (prior to 2018 it was for up to 5 years)	Eligible teachers working in an eligible school for at least 12 months of continuous service receive $5k p.a. for up to ten payments (prior to 2018, minimum service period was 2–3 years, depending on the school).	Teachers working at specified remote 6- and 8-point schools with 12 months or more of continuous services may be eligible for a $5k p.a. payment for every year of continuous service for a period of up to 10 years (that is, ten payments of $5k, or $50k in total for ten years of service, paid in arrears).	Permanent staff	Teachers and principals will need to: Be permanently employed, in either a full-time or part-time teaching role Work in one of the remote schools or remote Connected Community schools with at least 12 months continuous service Achieve satisfactory compliance with the DoE's performance development program	Separate list of eligible schools.			Y	Y	N	N
Experienced Teacher Benefit	$10k p.a. for up to 5 years	A $10k p.a. Experienced Teacher Benefit payable for up to five years, for those who have maintained proficient status, or	Eligible teachers can receive a $10k Experienced Teacher Benefit, payable for up to 5 years.	Permanent teachers currently in a position at 6- and 8-point incentive schools and 4-, 6- and 8-point CC schools.	Must have maintained proficient status, or equivalent, for at least six years. NSBTS staff are also eligible.	N – 4-point incentive schools $10k – 4-	$10k	$10k	Y	Y	N	N

Incentives	Value of incentive (if applicable)	The nature of the incentive	How it works (in brief)	Eligible positions/people	Eligibility requirements	4-pt	6-pt	8-pt	CC School	Perms [y/n]	Temps [y/n]	NSBTS staff [y/n]
		equivalent, for at least six years				point CC schools						
teach.Rural Scholarship	Up to $50k upfront course contribution fee, $7.5k per year of study, $6k on completion of study, $500 per week during rural practicum placement	The teach.Rural scholarship is aimed at high school students in their final year of secondary school who are intending to undertake tertiary study. It's intended to encourage them to study a teaching degree. University students can also apply.	Recipients receive up to $50k as an upfront course contribution fee, $7.5k per year of study, $6k on completion of study and $500 per week during rural practicum placement (required). Recipients are also guaranteed a permanent job in a rural or remote setting on completion of their studies.	Available for high school students who intend to undertake a teaching degree or university students already studying a teaching degree.	Students in their final year of secondary school or university students studying a teaching degree. Recipients must undertake a rural practicum during their study.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transfer-Points Scheme	N/A	Transfer points are allocated to teachers for each year of service, with different schools attracting different transfer points. Transfer points are one factor used to rank teachers applying for transfer in relative priority.	Transfer points are awarded per year of service with the number of points earned dependent on the perceived difficulty of staffing the school. Transfer points are calculated as: [Earn rate current school x service] + 0.5 x [Prior transfer points balance] When a temporary teacher becomes permanent and subsequently eligible for a transfer they receive a credit for periods of service as a temporary teacher in excess of one term.	Permanent staff	Permanent staff will accumulate transfer points per year of teaching.	Receive 4 transfer points per year of service.	Receive 6 transfer points per year of service.	Receive 8 transfer points per year of service.	Y	Y	N	N

Incentives	Value of incentive (if applicable)	The nature of the incentive	How it works (in brief)	Eligible positions/people	Eligibility requirements	4-pt	6-pt	8-pt	CC Schol	Perms [y/n]	Temps [y/n]	NSBTS staff [y/n]
Priority Transfer	N/A	Transfer points (above) are accumulated and used to prioritise an application for transfer after serving the relative number of years.	Teachers who have served the required number of years in eligible incentive schools are prioritised should an appropriate position become vacant at a school they have nominated.	Permanent staff	Must have served the required number of years at a school that is eligible for this incentive, being all 6 and 8-point schools and selected 4-point schools.	Priority transfer only available for selected 4-point incentive schools. Number of years of service prior to transfer depends on the school. Priority transfer after 5 years for 4-point CC schools.	Priority transfer after 3 years for both 6-point incentive schools and 6-point CC schools.	Priority transfer after 2–3 years for both 8-point incentive schools and 8-point CC schools.	Y	Y	N	N
Locality allowance	Varies	If appointed to an eligible school. Locality allowances include climatic, Broken Hill, Country Area Program, Isolation from socio-economic goods and services, medical and dental reimbursement, motor vehicle and depreciation	Is dependent upon a teacher's personal circumstances, therefore a teacher needs to apply and may then be paid the relevant locality allowance. Different allowances – e.g. climatic, socio-economic and motor vehicle – allocated to different schools and on different levels.		Separate list of eligible schools and relevant allowances.					Y	Y	N

Incentives	Value of incentive (if applicable)	The nature of the incentive	How it works (in brief)	Eligible positions/people	Eligibility requirements	4-pt	6-pt	8-pt	CC School	Perms [y/n]	Temps [y/n]	NSBTS staff [y/n]
Rural Teacher Incentive (RTI)	$20–30k	Teachers working at eligible schools will be eligible to receive an incentive with a value of $20–30k depending on the remoteness of the school. The rental subsidy is deducted from the RTI payment.	Teachers may also choose to take advantage of salary sacrifice options, including superannuation, novated car leases, portable electronic devices, work-related expenses such as self-education, or tax and financial advice. Eligible teachers will receive their rural teacher incentive one term in arrears, as cash paid into a nominated account, minus any rental subsidy amount. Payments will take place four times a year, early in each term. No application necessary.	Permanent staff at eligible schools – 6 and 8-point incentive schools or 4, 6 and 8-point Connected Communities schools.		N/A – 4-point incentive schools – $20k – 4-point CC schools	$20k – 6-point incentive schools – $25k – 6-point CC schools	$25k – 8-point incentive schools – $30k – 8-point CC schools	Y	Y	N	N
Executive principal 5-year bonus	$50k	The incentive establishes a new role of 'Executive Principal' which is eligible for a $50k bonus if there is evidence of significantly improving student outcomes at the end of 5 years.	The program allows for a principal to be appointed for 3 years, then the DoE will extend an invitation to extend by 2 years. At the end of 5 years, if the principal shows evidence that the outcomes for students have changed exponentially, the principal is given a $50k bonus (first time a bonus structure was included).	Executive principals at Connected Communities schools.		Eligible positions at CC schools.			Y	Y	N	N

Incentives	Value of incentive (if applicable)	The nature of the incentive	How it works (in brief)	Eligible positions/people	Eligibility requirements	4-pt	6-pt	8-pt	CC Schoo l	Perms [y/n]	Temp s [y/n]	NSBTS staff] [y/n]
Additional personal leave	N/A	Additional personal leave days for eligible staff at 4, 6 and 8-point incentive and Connected Communities Incentive schools	The entitlement varies depending on the points of the school but permanent and temporary staff receive additional personal leave entitlement (personal, family, community)	Permanent and temporary staff		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
10-week trial prior to permanent appointment		A 10-week trial before a permanent appointment to a rural and remote school.	Prospective staff are eligible for a 10-week trial prior to permanent appointment to a rural and remote school	Permanent staff		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Additional professional developmen t days	N/A	Additional training and development days to allow travel to other centres for training	Eligible staff receive a number of additional professional development days. The number of days varies based on the points of the school	Permanent and temporary staff at 6 and 8-point incentive schools and selected 4-point incentive schools. Permanent teachers at 4, 6 and 8-point Connected Communities schools. Temporary teachers at 6 and 8-point Connected Communities schools and selected 4-point Connected Communities schools.		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Rural Experience Program	Teachers receive a fixed allowance of $500 per week during the placement period.	The program provides an opportunity for a permanent teacher to take part in a short-term placement in a rural and remote school.	Principals at the rural experience schools have the opportunity to identify a temporary placement opportunity (funded by the initiative) for a minimum of one and a maximum of four terms in a school year. Permanent teachers	Current full-time permanent teachers in schools not identified as rural or remote.	Teachers must have: A current full-time permanent teaching position with the DoE in a non-rural experience school which is located more than 150 kilometres from the rural experience placement	Incentive schools.				Y	N	N

Incentives	Value of incentive (if applicable)	The nature of the incentive	How it works (in brief)	Eligible positions/people	Eligibility requirements	4-pt	6-pt	8-pt	CC School	Perms [y/n]	Temps [y/n]	NSBTS staff [y/n]
			have the opportunity to apply for these initiative funded rural experience placements.		school to which they apply Two years of cumulative teaching experience The endorsement and support of their substantive principal Been assessed as satisfactory in their two most recent annual performance and development reviews Proficient Teacher accreditation (minimum), priority given to those with Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher accreditation No open workers compensation claims/cases that affect the applicant's ability to undertake the placement in the present context of the placement school Not previously undertaken a rural experience program placement							

Incentives	Value of incentive (if applicable)	The nature of the incentive	How it works [in brief]	Eligible positions/people	Eligibility requirements	4-pt	6-pt	8-pt	CC School	Perms [y/n]	Temps [y/n]	NSBTS staff [y/n]
NSBTS Incentive	$20–$25k	Permanent and certain temporary Non-School-Based Teaching Service (NSBTS) staff working in specified state offices are eligible to receive this incentive to assist with the attraction and retention of staff in these areas.	Eligible staff will be paid in arrears four times a year, at the end of each. Eligible staff can choose how to spend their incentive and may choose to receive the whole value of the incentive as salary or take advantage of the rental subsidy and/or salary packaging. NSBTS teachers are also eligible for the Experienced Teacher Benefit in addition to this incentive.	NSBTS staff in state offices at Bourke, Broken Hill, Deniliquin and Moree are eligible to receive the incentive of between $20 and $25k ($25k in Bourke, $20k in Broken Hill, Deniliquin, Moree) Staff in the following roles will be eligible: Permanent NSBTS in a permanent NSBTS role Temporary engagement in a NSBTS role Permanent teacher temporarily assigned to a NSBTS role	NSBTS staff will be eligible to receive the incentive at the end of each quarter, as long as they: Remain in an eligible NSBTS position or move directly between eligible positions Do not move to a non-eligible NSBTS position Maintain satisfactory compliance with the DoE's Performance and Development Framework Are not on leave for more than 25% of the payment criteria	State offices in Bourke will receive a value of $25k per annum. State offices in Broken Hill, Deniliquin and Moree will receive a value of $20k p.a.				N	N	Y

Appendix 6: List of Incentive Schools as at June 2020

School Code	School Name	Transfer points	Town/suburb	ASGS
1028	Alma Public School	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional
1051	Ardlethan Central School	4	Ardlethan	Outer Regional
1055	Ariah Park Central School	4	Ariah Park	Outer Regional
1115	Balranald Central School	6	Balranald	Outer Regional
1130	Baradine Central School	4	Baradine	Remote
1131	Barellan Central School	4	Barellan	Outer Regional
8461	Barham High School	6	Barham	Outer Regional
1135	Barham Public School	6	Barham	Outer Regional
1275	Boggabilla Central School	6	Boggabilla	Outer Regional
1160	Beckom Public School	4	Beckom	Outer Regional
1175	Bellata Public School	6	Bellata	Outer Regional
1207	Berrigan Public School	4	Berrigan	Outer Regional
1237	Binnaway Central School	4	Binnaway	Outer Regional
1261	Blighty Public School	4	Blighty	Outer Regional
1296	Bonshaw Public School	6	Bonshaw	Outer Regional
8486	Bombala High School	4	Bombala	Outer Regional
1288	Bombala Public School	4	Bombala	Outer Regional
1303	Booligal Public School	8	Booligal	Remote
1307	Boomi Public School	8	Boomi	Remote
1326	Bourke Public School	6	Bourke	Remote
1318	Boree Creek Public School	4	Boree Creek	Outer Regional
1350	Brewarrina Central School	8	Brewarrina	Very Remote
1369	Broken Hill Public School	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional
1371	Broken Hill North Public School	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional
1432	Burke Ward Public School	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional
1363	Brocklesby Public School	4	Brocklesby	Inner Regional
1447	Burren Junction Public School	8	Burren Junction	Remote
1507	Carinda Public School	8	Carinda	Remote
1578	Cobar Public School	6	Cobar	Remote
1589	Collarenebri Central School	8	Collarenebri	Remote
1425	Bunnaloo Public School	4	Bunnaloo	Outer Regional
1606	Conargo Public School	4	Conargo	Outer Regional
1609	Condobolin Public School	6	Condobolin	Outer Regional
1631	Coonamble Public School	6	Coonamble	Remote
1517	Carrathool Public School	8	Carrathool	Outer Regional

School Code	School Name	Transfer points	Town/suburb	ASGS
1688	Buronga Public School	6	Buronga	Outer Regional
1732	Dareton Public School	6	Dareton	Outer Regional
1867	Euabalong West Public School	6	Euabalong West	Remote
1885	Euston Public School	6	Euston	Outer Regional
1956	Garah Public School	6	Garah	Remote
1986	Girilambone Public School	6	Girilambone	Remote
2027	Gol Gol Public School	6	Gol Gol	Outer Regional
2033	Goodooga Central School	8	Goodooga	Very Remote
2035	Goolgowi Public School	6	Goolgowi	Outer Regional
2094	Gulargambone Central School	6	Gulargambone	Outer Regional
2115	Gwabegar Public School	8	Gwabegar	Remote
2145	Hay Public School	6	Hay	Outer Regional
2155	Hermidale Public School	6	Hermidale	Remote
2165	Hillston Central School	6	Hillston	Remote
2213	Ivanhoe Central School	8	Ivanhoe	Very Remote
1736	Darlington Point Public School	6	Darlington Point	Outer Regional
1745	Delegate Public School	4	Delegate	Outer Regional
8218	Deniliquin High School	4	Deniliquin	Inner Regional
4281	Deniliquin North Public School	4	Deniliquin	Inner Regional
4112	Deniliquin South Public School	4	Deniliquin	Inner Regional
4418	Edward Public School	4	Deniliquin	Inner Regional
1838	Emmaville Central School	6	Emmaville	Outer Regional
2359	Lake Cargelligo Central School	6	Lake Cargelligo	Remote
2395	Lightning Ridge Central School	8	Lightning Ridge	Remote
2523	Menindee Central School	8	Menindee	Very Remote
1894	Fairfax Public School	6	Maules Creek	Outer Regional
8360	Finley High School	4	Finley	Inner Regional
3945	Finley Public School	4	Finley	Inner Regional
2618	Moree Public School	4	Moree	Outer Regional
2632	Moulamein Public School	6	Moulamein	Outer Regional
2675	Mungindi Central School	8	Mungindi	Remote
2701	Naradhan Public School	6	Naradhan	Remote
2765	North Star Public School	6	North Star	Outer Regional
5730	Gralee School	4	Leeton	Outer Regional
2068	Gravesend Public School	6	Gravesend	Outer Regional
2785	Nyngan Public School	6	Nyngan	Remote
2827	Pallamallawa Public School	4	Pallamallawa	Outer Regional
2870	Pilliga Public School	8	Pilliga	Remote
2893	Pomona Public School	6	Pomona	Remote
2919	Quambone Public School	8	Quambone	Remote
2935	Rankins Springs Public School	6	Rankins Springs	Outer Regional

School Code	School Name	Transfer points	Town/suburb	ASGS
2226	Jerilderie Public School	4	Jerilderie	Outer Regional
4270	Khancoban Public School	6	Khancoban	Outer Regional
3211	Tibooburra Outback Public School	8	Tibooburra	Very Remote
8156	Leeton High School	4	Leeton	Outer Regional
2386	Leeton Public School	4	Leeton	Outer Regional
3235	Tooleybuc Central School	6	Tooleybuc	Outer Regional
3239	Toomelah Public School	8	Boggabilla	Outer Regional
3249	Tottenham Central School	6	Tottenham	Remote
3270	Tullamore Central School	6	Tullamore	Outer Regional
2500	Mathoura Public School	4	Mathoura	Outer Regional
2508	Mayrung Public School	4	Deniliquin	Outer Regional
2522	Mendooran Central School	4	Mendooran	Outer Regional
3272	Tullibigeal Central School	6	Tullibigeal	Remote
3311	Ungarie Central School	6	Ungarie	Outer Regional
3342	Walgett Community College - Primary School	8	Walgett	Remote
3365	Wanaaring Public School	8	Wanaaring	Very Remote
3392	Warren Central School	4	Warren	Outer Regional
3416	Wee Waa Public School	4	Wee Waa	Outer Regional
3421	Wentworth Public School	6	Wentworth	Outer Regional
3435	White Cliffs Public School	8	White Cliffs	Very Remote
4214	Narrandera East Infants School	4	Narrandera	Outer Regional
8157	Narrandera High School	4	Narrandera	Outer Regional
2710	Narrandera Public School	4	Narrandera	Outer Regional
2748	Niangala Public School	6	Niangala	Outer Regional
3442	Wilcannia Central School	8	Wilcannia	Very Remote
2768	Nowendoc Public School	6	Nowendoc	Outer Regional
3559	Yetman Public School	6	Yetman	Outer Regional
3580	Rowena Public School	8	Rowena	Remote
2791	Oaklands Central School	6	Oaklands	Outer Regional
3594	Louth Public School	8	Louth	Very Remote
3626	Enngonia Public School	8	Enngonia	Very Remote
4413	Parkview Public School	4	Leeton	Outer Regional
3717	Croppa Creek Public School	6	Croppa Creek	Outer Regional
3912	Palinyewah Public School	6	Wentworth	Remote
4118	Moree East Public School	4	Moree	Outer Regional
2895	Pooncarie Public School	8	Pooncarie	Remote
4225	Tulloona Public School	8	Tulloona	Outer Regional
2920	Quandialla Public School	4	Quandialla	Outer Regional
4228	Bullarah Public School	8	Bullarah	Remote
4232	Morgan Street Public School	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional
4233	Railway Town Public School	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional

School Code	School Name	Transfer points	Town/suburb	ASGS
4262	Mallawa Public School	8	Moree	Remote
3153	Tallimba Public School	6	Tallimba	Outer Regional
4305	Weilmoringle Public School	8	Weilmoringle	Very Remote
3218	Tingha Public School	6	Tingha	Outer Regional
4348	Coleambally Central School	4	Coleambally	Outer Regional
4454	Marra Creek Public School	8	Nyngan	Remote
4565	Clare Public School	8	Clare	Remote
3254	Trangie Central School	4	Trangie	Outer Regional
3259	Trundle Central School	6	Trundle	Outer Regional
4644	Bourke-Walgett School of Distance Education	8	Bourke	Remote
5302	School of the Air	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional
5762	Barwon Learning Centre	4	Moree	Outer Regional
3314	Urana Public School	6	Urana	Outer Regional
3336	Wakool Burraboi Public School	6	Wakool	Outer Regional
8105	Broken Hill High School	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional
8119	Hay War Memorial High School	6	Hay	Outer Regional
3343	Walhallow Public School	6	Caroona	Outer Regional
3364	Wamoon Public School	4	Leeton	Outer Regional
8270	Wee Waa High School	4	Wee Waa	Outer Regional
8325	Moree Secondary College Albert St Campus	4	Moree	Outer Regional
8346	Condobolin High School	6	Condobolin	Outer Regional
8353	Nyngan High School	6	Nyngan	Remote
8355	Bourke High School	6	Bourke	Remote
8356	Cobar High School	6	Cobar	Remote
3415	Weethalle Public School	6	Weethalle	Outer Regional
8451	Coonamble High School	6	Coonamble	Remote
8471	Moree Secondary College Carol Ave Campus	4	Moree East	Outer Regional
8392	West Wyalong High School	4	West Wyalong	Outer Regional
3519	West Wyalong Public School	4	West Wyalong	Outer Regional
8475	Walgett Community College - High School	8	Walgett	Remote
3438	Whitton-Murrami Public School	4	Whitton	Outer Regional
8491	Willyama High School	6	Broken Hill	Outer Regional
8494	Coomealla High School	6	Dareton	Outer Regional
3518	Wyalong Public School	4	Wyalong	Outer Regional
4556	Wytaliba Public School	6	Glen Innes	Outer Regional
3536	Yanco Public School	4	Yanco	Outer Regional

Appendix 7: Summary of stakeholder engagement

Consultation approach overview

The review engaged with over 32 stakeholder groups to ensure that recommendations reflected the broad and collective view of all stakeholders.

External stakeholders included:

NSW Teachers Federation	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
Primary Principals Association	Public Service Association of NSW
Secondary Schools Council	Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW
Isolated Children's Parents Association	Special Education Principals' and Leaders' Association

While stakeholders reflected differing perspectives, the feedback supported the review into rural and remote incentives and adopting a fresh and innovative approach.

The review also conducted broad and deep analysis into a significant number of data sources that reflect teacher perspectives. This includes analysis of the PMES and Tell them from me surveys and recent consultations informing departmental strategies including the Rural and Remote Education Strategy.

Additional consultation mechanisms included a discussion paper made available to teachers, on site visits and a survey to all school principals as follows:

1. Discussion Paper: this paper reflected developing key themes and enabled a structured approach to stakeholder engagement. This paper was made available to key stakeholders and via the Department's intranet. The feedback form this paper has been included in the summaries, below.

2. On-site visits and virtual consultations with schools in rural and remote locations: School visits were conducted over 5 consecutive days from 3 May to 7 May 2021, by 2 staff driving from Sydney to all 5 locations in the Temora Principal Network, West Wyalong Principal Network and Cowra Principal Network.[59]

3. Principal Survey: A principal survey sent to all school principals on the 4 May 2021. In response to stakeholder interest, the survey opening period was extended for an additional four days to close on 17 May.

It is important to note that all these sources of evidence and consultation were not always consistent. This is not only reasonable, but expected, given the fact that rural and remote communities are dynamic and different from each other, as well as constantly changing and adapting over time.

Equally, evidence from consultation with different groups often differed. The same issues can be seen from highly divergent, but equally valid perspectives.

Where this occurred, the review team posed those tensions back to stakeholders to respond to the alternative position, looked to further evidentiary sources, and maintained transparency in this report regarding those divergences.

The following sections outline the key themes from on-site visits to rural and remote schools, feedback on the discussion as well as the analysis of results from a survey to all NSW school principals.

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59   Schools were selected in consultation with Deputy Secretaries School Performance and Directors Educational Learning, including agreement from relevant Principals.

What we heard

Stakeholders were aligned in expressing strong interest in improving rural and remote incentives in NSW. Stakeholders told us that more could be done to attract and retain teachers to rural and remote schools and that immediate action is required to address perceived inequities in the incentives scheme system and other related issues, including teacher housing.

Theme 1: Teacher Housing and rental subsidies

Teacher housing was an issue raised at every school, and presented as an issue that impacts both attraction and retention.

Key concerns expressed included:

- the poor quality of teacher housing, including slow pace of maintenance
- availability issues (low supply) including concerns about future demand management
- safety issues
- no local management of teacher housing and perceived lack of understanding of "local context" (e.g. need for air conditioning)

Principals reported spending time inquiring about & locating rental accommodation as part of ensuring offers of employment are accepted. It is often word of mouth which secures a property for these teachers.

Similarly, principals reported concerns over practicum students and often spent time trying to make sure they had safe accommodation.

A lack of available rental properties (private rental market) was also raised as a key issue. For most schools visited, the rental subsidy was not an option which meant that high local rental prices and availability were blocking teachers out of the market.

Theme 2: Mobility and Employment status (temporary to permanent)

Teachers and principals reported lengthy temporary contracts and uncertainty of employment year on year as a source of stress and concern.

Stakeholders reported it was not uncommon for staff to be on temporary contracts for 5 – 15 years. All were local residents who are unable to relocate and desire permanent positions within their schools. Most of the schools where this was a problem were 2 transfer point schools. In a small number of cases where staff were merit assessed, they failed to obtain permanent employment. In all cases the failure to obtain permanency is affecting morale and in some cases teachers left the schools and profession to pursue other careers.

Theme 3: Efficacy of incentives and perceived inequities

Some principals suggested that incentives were a greater consideration for younger/less experienced teachers, who may consider teaching in a rural or remote area above a metropolitan area because of the incentives available. A 4-point transfer school in close proximity to 6- and 8-point transfer schools noted that this perceived inequity caused some tension among staff. There was acknowledgement about the need to "draw a line in the sand" but also a query about whether the categorisation was based on contemporary experience of difficulty to staff/remoteness.

At one school, there was a suggestion that more flexibility in the allocation of incentives would be helpful.

Stakeholders were aligned that transfer points offered a level of mobility to staff that was an important factor in attraction and retention "it's a double edged sword... we don't want to people to go but we don't want them to feel stuck...they wouldn't come if they felt like they didn't have an out...but at the end of the day we need the right people here".

Transfer points	Transfer points: above 4 points were deemed to attract staff, although they also mean staff will use them to leave after a few years. Significant commentary on the perceived inequity of transfer points, particularly for schools with lower transfer points in close geographical proximity to schools with higher points. This was reported as creating a tension for schools and communities.
Scholarships	Scholarships [Teach rural] were also mentioned as a way of injecting younger teachers in to schools, however after the compulsory 3 year period many left to return closer to family and friends. There was support for increasing the number of scholarships available to ITE students to secure them going forward. Concerns around the ability of scholarship recipients to refuse vacancies was raised as a concern, but the availability of vacancies meant "they can pick & choose a school".
Rental subsidy	Rental Subsidy in 4, 6 & 8 point schools were mentioned as an attractive incentive, however payment of the rental subsidy was a source of confusion. Clearer information about how rental subsidy is applied to an individual's incentive package would be helpful. Some suggested rental subsidy being applied to 2 point schools as a reduced rate such as 20% would be helpful in attracting teachers to these schools. Commentary that the subsidy was not meeting the increases to rental prices.
Personal leave	Additional personal leave was mentioned as useful when travelling to visit family and friends as it is seen as being used to travel therefore not taking up leave days.

Theme 4: Ease of finding information and resolving issues

Overall, schools appeared to have differing understandings of the incentives scheme, or elements within it. There was also feedback that it was difficult to either obtain clear information about the incentives scheme, or that this information was not appropriately targeted.

There also appeared to be limited understanding by school principals on how rental subsidy works in relation to salary, converting temp staff to permanent, how to locate assistance centrally for vehicle, curriculum resources, above establishment roles.

Some stakeholders queried where DELs could have a more active role in managing and resolving issues at the local level.

Theme 5: Staffing: use of casuals, recruitment times and teacher shortages

Schools reported a significant lack of casual staff and a lack of relief teachers to provide support has certainly was raised a recurring issue and a disincentive to teaching in rural settings.

A lack of access to casual impacts on the school's ability to make professional development opportunities available and sometimes puts the ability to run classes at risk. Principals and teachers interviewed felt guilty about taking personal leave or sick leave as it left the school and colleagues 'in the lurch'. In cases where this was unavoidable" principals took classes, teachers jumped in to take extra classes to help each other out, the schools rely on their casuals, and in worst case scenarios classes were merged or split to accommodate an immediate crisis.

Many reported retired local teachers (e.g. 'the fab five' – Cowra PS) as the only source of casual teachers. Principals are aware that the pool of retired resources is a time limited resource and expressed concerned about the pipeline of staffing.

In areas where the Casual Supplementation Program was in operation (Parkes/Forbes) stakeholders were aligned that this program has had limited impact on their staffing challenges.

Principals also reported long recruitment times, or an inability to make competitive offers resulted in candidates accepting other roles, particularly in the private/catholic system.

Teacher shortages were specifically reported in the subject areas of science, mathematics and languages (including English). A response to this was to have teachers working outside their field of expertise, Principals teaching, and faculties operating without head teachers for extended periods of time, reportedly at the detriment of other staff and students (see: Forbes HS).

Theme 6: Promotion of towns/schools

Many principals explained they spend time and energy on spruiking the benefits of the town in which their school is located.

A number of schools suggested there is an opportunity for specific town and school profiles to be developed to further promote the benefits of the school and living in the area.

There were some suggestions that there are opportunities to work more closely with Councils on promotion opportunities/planning.

Theme 7: Rural experience opportunities and partnerships with universities

There was strong feedback that earlier engagement with teaching students while at university is critical to developing and maintaining a pipeline of teachers to work in rural and remote areas. "we should be promoting rural experience as being the embryonic start to their career. Start here to learn to teach, you get yourself ahead".

'How we work with universities is critical for us and critical for the pipeline of supply out in the bush.' [West Wyalong]

There was a strong feedback that teachers from the local area [or elsewhere in the country] were more likely to take up rural teaching opportunities and to stay there. " you've got to target the right people… we've seen that people from the country are more likely to take up teaching or to stay because they know what it's like, they're already sold on the lifestyle…" [Cootamundra HS]

The "Beyond the Line" program was noted by many schools as model that had previously influenced teacher decisions to teach in rural NSW.

Theme 8: Support for families

Schools reported support for teachers' partners' may influence moving to rural schools to teach. Some schools reported when spouses were unable to locate work locally the teacher tended to leave as well: "they'd stay longer because they both have jobs"

Principal Survey

Principals were invited to provide feedback regarding the rural and remote incentives program through an online survey.

The survey examined a broad range of themes ranging from perceived value of each type of incentive as well as inviting free-text feedback from participants.

488 responses were received with, as illustrated below, roughly a third each of respondents from major cities; inner regional; and outer regional/remote/very remote.

Profile of Respondents, n = 488

listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness
- Not Defined
- (Blank)
- Major Cities of Australia
- Inner Regional Australia
- Outer Regional Australia
- Remote Australia
- Very Remote Australia
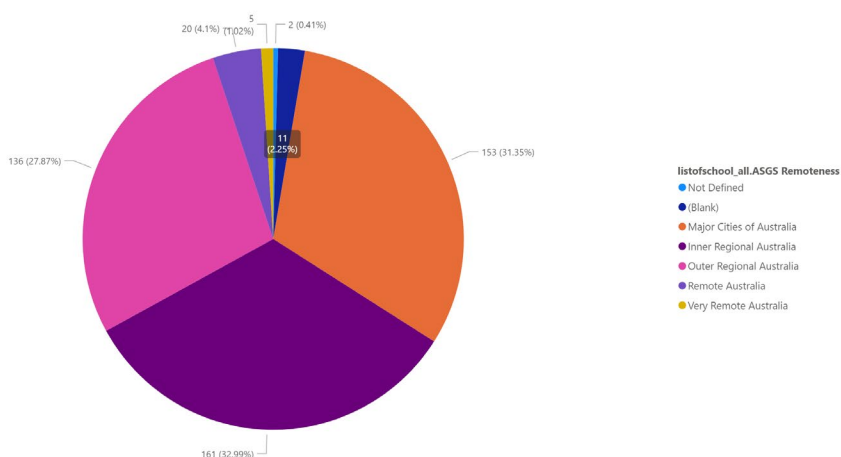
Responses by incentive versus non-incentive school demonstrate more responses were received from the latter than the former.

Is your school a rural and remote incentive school?

Count of ID by Is your school a rural & remote incentive school? and listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness

listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness ● Not Defined ● (Blank) ● Major Cities of Australia ● Inner Regional Australia ● Outer Regional Australia ● Remote Australia ● Very Remote Australia

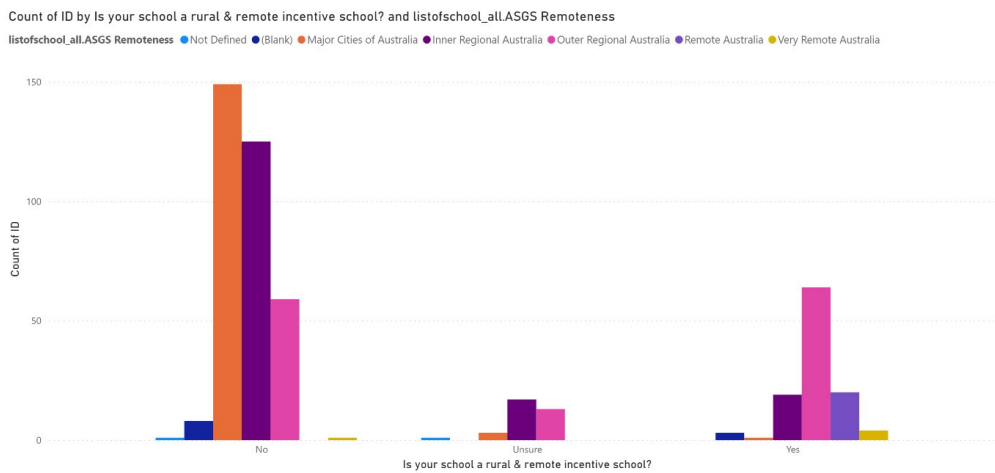The above profile was mirrored in the response to the following question:

Are there any teachers in your school currently receiving incentives as part of the rural and remote incentive scheme?

Count of ID by Are there any teachers in your school currently receiving incentives as part of the rural and remote incentive scheme? and listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness

listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness ● Not Defined ● (Blank) ● Major Cities of Australia ● Inner Regional Australia ● Outer Regional Australia ● Remote Australia ● Very Remote Australia
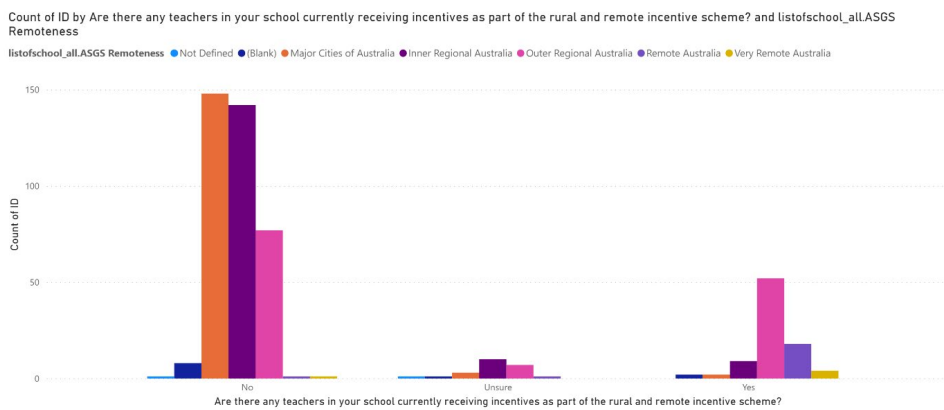
As shown below, schools in every transfer point category were represented.

What transfer points apply to your school?

Count of ID by Transfer points and listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness

listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness ● Not Defined ● (Blank) ● Major Cities of Australia ● Inner Regional Australia ● Outer Regional Australia ● Remote Australia ● Very Remote Australia
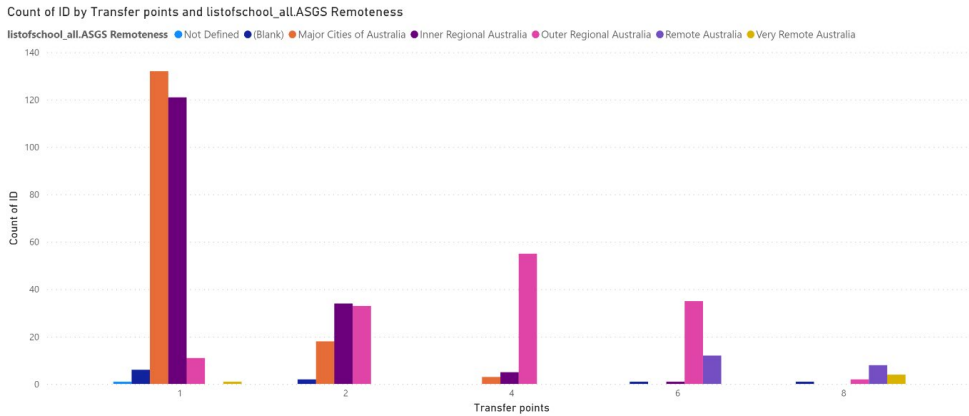
Summary graphs of responses are provided below:

I understand what incentives are available in rural and remote locations?
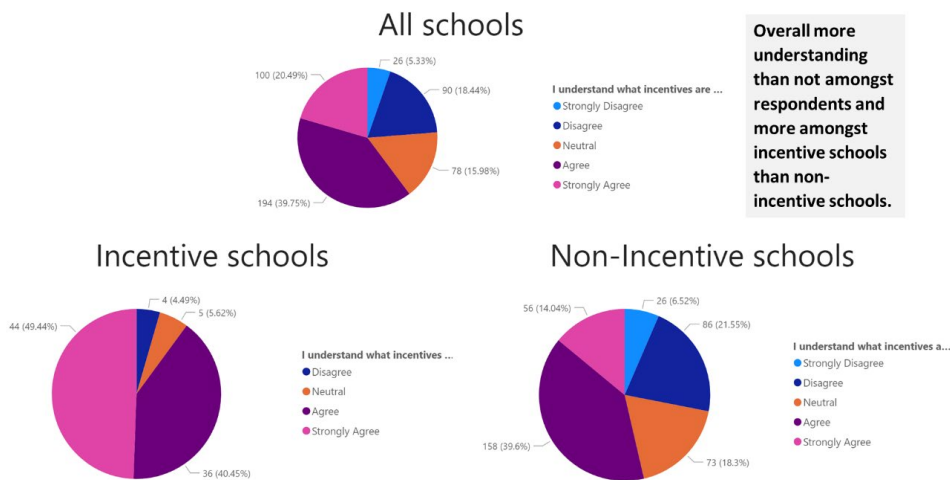
All schools

Overall more understanding than not amongst respondents and more amongst incentive schools than non-incentive schools.

Incentive schools

Non-Incentive schools

I understand what incentives are available in rural and remote locations?

Count of ID by I understand what incentives are available in rural and remote locations? and listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness

listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness ● Not Defined ● (Blank) ● Major Cities of Australia ● Inner Regional Australia ● Outer Regional Australia ● Remote Australia ● Very Remote Australia
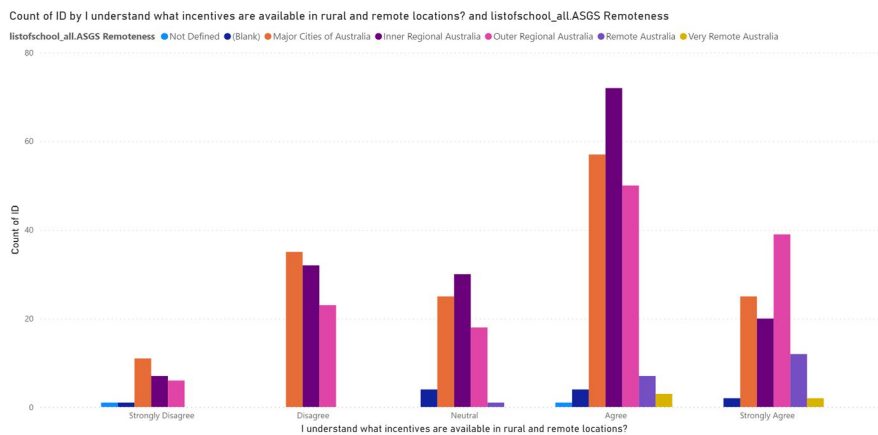
For additional comparative clarity, this graph is split by ASGS below:
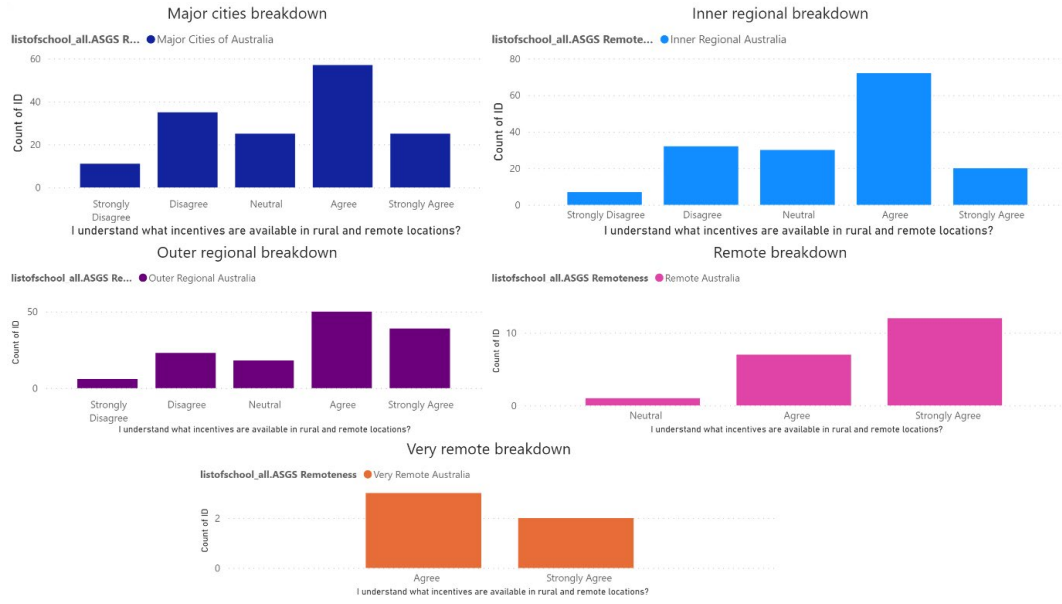
Major cities breakdown

listofschool_all.ASGS R... ● Major Cities of Australia

I understand what incentives are available in rural and remote locations?

Inner regional breakdown

listofschool_all.ASGS Remote... ● Inner Regional Australia

I understand what incentives are available in rural and remote locations?

Outer regional breakdown

listofschool_all.ASGS Re... ● Outer Regional Australia

I understand what incentives are available in rural and remote locations?

Remote breakdown

listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness ● Remote Australia

I understand what incentives are available in rural and remote locations?

Very remote breakdown

listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness ● Very Remote Australia

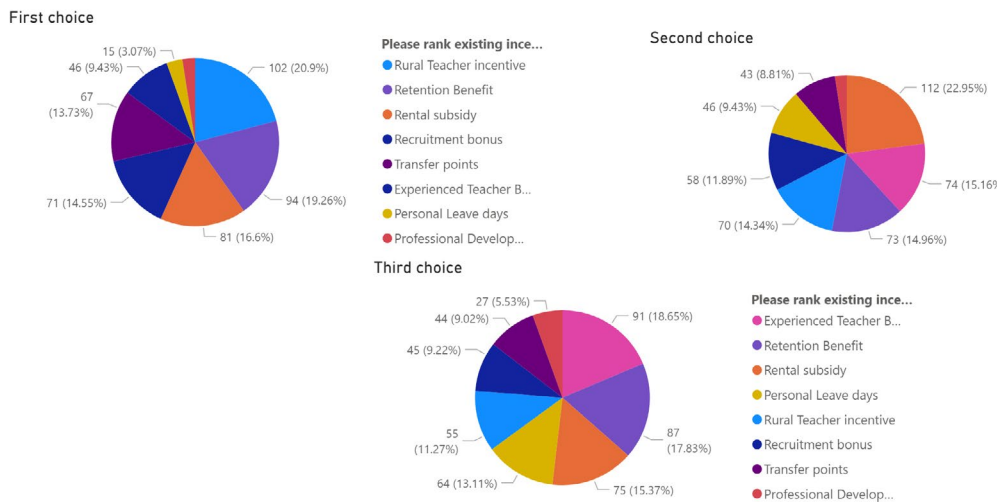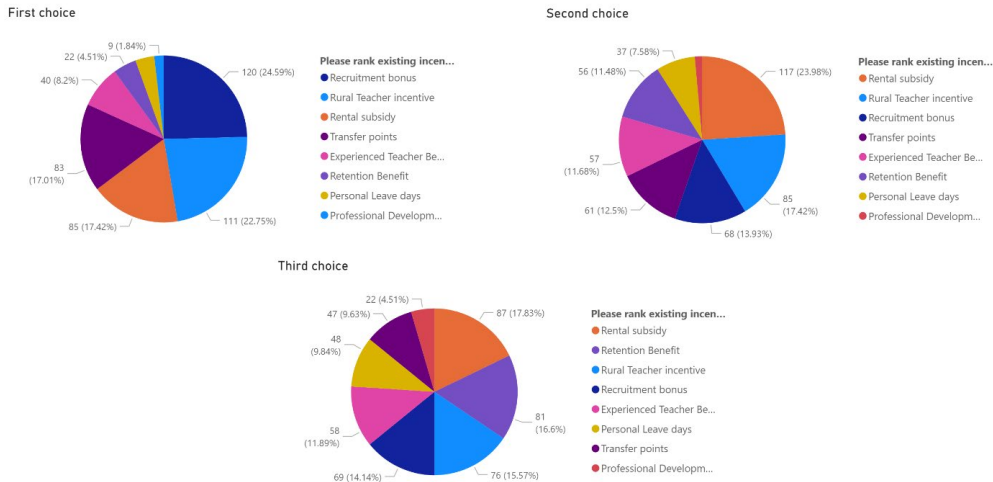
I understand what incentives are available in rural and remote locations?

I am confident that I can find information on the rural and remote incentives scheme should I need to

All schools

I am confident that I can find inf...
● Strongly Disagree
● Disagree
● Neutral
● Agree
● Strongly Agree

Incentive schools

I am confident that I can find i
● Disagree
● Neutral
● Agree
● Strongly Agree

Non-Incentive schools

I am confident that I can find ...
● Strongly Disagree
● Disagree
● Neutral
● Agree
● Strongly Agree

Top 3 chosen incentives for attraction

First choice

120 (24.59%)
9 (1.84%)
22 (4.51%)
40 (8.2%)
83 (17.01%)
85 (17.42%)
111 (22.75%)

Please rank existing incen...
- Recruitment bonus
- Rural Teacher incentive
- Rental subsidy
- Transfer points
- Experienced Teacher Be...
- Retention Benefit
- Personal Leave days
- Professional Developm...

Second choice

37 (7.58%)
117 (23.98%)
56 (11.48%)
85 (17.42%)
57 (11.68%)
61 (12.5%)
68 (13.93%)

Please rank existing incen...
- Rental subsidy
- Rural Teacher incentive
- Recruitment bonus
- Transfer points
- Experienced Teacher Be...
- Retention Benefit
- Personal Leave days
- Professional Developm...

Third choice

22 (4.51%)
87 (17.83%)
47 (9.63%)
48 (9.84%)
81 (16.6%)
58 (11.89%)
69 (14.14%)
76 (15.57%)

Please rank existing incen...
- Rental subsidy
- Retention Benefit
- Rural Teacher incentive
- Recruitment bonus
- Experienced Teacher Be...
- Personal Leave days
- Transfer points
- Professional Developm...

First choice

15 (3.07%)
102 (20.9%)
46 (9.43%)
67 (13.73%)
71 (14.55%)
94 (19.26%)
81 (16.6%)

Please rank existing ince...
- Rural Teacher incentive
- Retention Benefit
- Rental subsidy
- Recruitment bonus
- Transfer points
- Experienced Teacher B...
- Personal Leave days
- Professional Develop...

Second choice

43 (8.81%)
112 (22.95%)
46 (9.43%)
74 (15.16%)
58 (11.89%)
73 (14.96%)
70 (14.34%)

Third choice

27 (5.53%)
44 (9.02%)
91 (18.65%)
45 (9.22%)
55 (11.27%)
87 (17.83%)
64 (13.11%)
75 (15.37%)

Please rank existing ince...
- Experienced Teacher B...
- Retention Benefit
- Rental subsidy
- Personal Leave days
- Rural Teacher incentive
- Recruitment bonus
- Transfer points
- Professional Develop...

(relates to Q7) Option to provide additional information about ranking here (max ~350 characters)

9 (3.49%)
15 (5.81%)
23 (8.91%)
13 (5.04%)
73 (28.29%)
51 (19.77%)
10 (3.88%)
9 (3.49%)
55 (21.32%)

- Personal Leave
- Providing financial incentives/ payments works
- Housing/rental
- Offering incentives to temporary staff
- Pathway to permanency
- A critique/mention of transfer points/ incentive transfers
- Introducing a guaranteed transfer/ certainty of transfer out
- Other
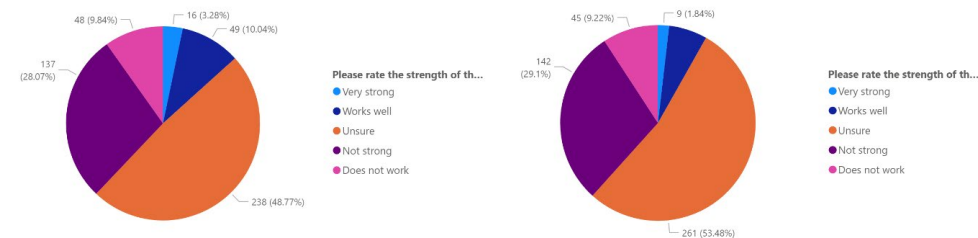- Rental subsidy taken out of RTI misleading

(relates to Q9) Option to provide additional information about ranking here (max ~350 characters):


Please rate the strength of the Rural Experience Program in attracting teachers and principals:

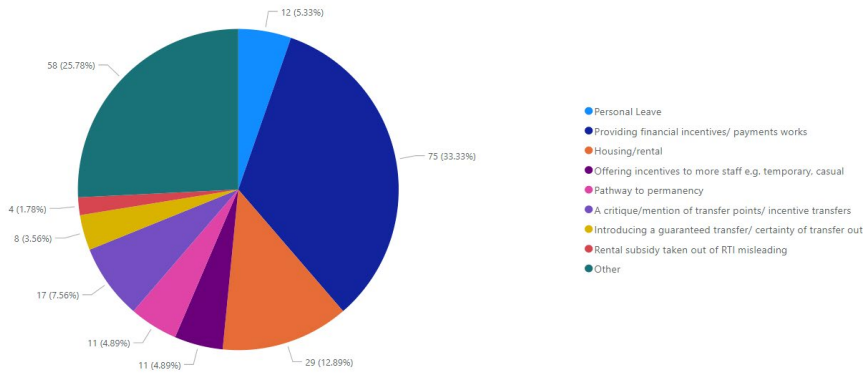## Please rate the strength of the Rural Experience Program in retaining teachers and principals:

Please rate the strength of the Rural Experience Program in attracting teachers and principals:
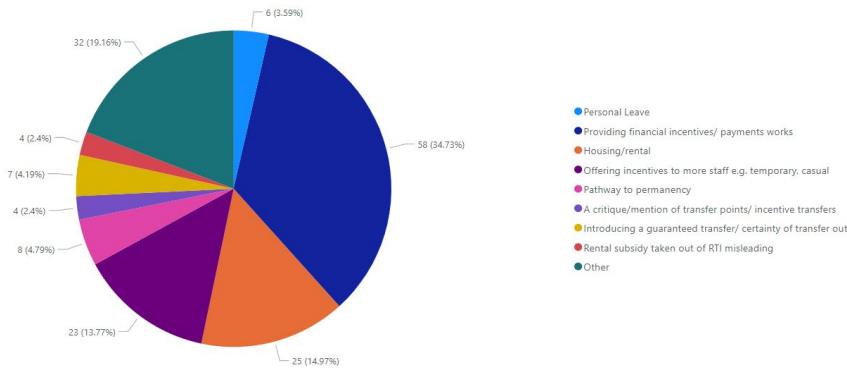

Count of Please rate the strength of the Rural Experience Program in attracting teachers and principals: by Please rate the strength of the Rural Experience Program in attracting teachers and principals: and listofschool_all.ASGS Remoteness
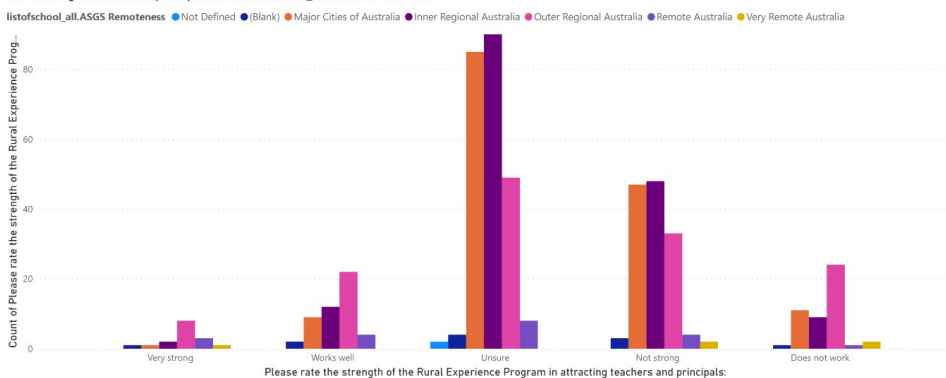
Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the rural & remote incentives scheme to retain teachers and principals within rural and remote schools? Please limit your response to ~350 characters

- Personal Leave
- Providing financial incentives/ payments works
- Housing/rental
- Offering incentives to more staff e.g. temporary, casual
- Pathway to permanency
- A critique/mention of transfer points/ incentive transfers
- Introducing a guaranteed transfer/ certainty of transfer out
- Rental subsidy taken out of RTI misleading
- Other

12 (5.33%)
58 (25.78%)
75 (33.33%)
4 (1.78%)
8 (3.56%)
17 (7.56%)
11 (4.89%)
11 (4.89%)
29 (12.89%)

Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the rural & remote incentives scheme to attract teachers and principals to rural and remote schools? Please limit your response to ~350 characters

- Personal Leave
- Providing financial incentives/ payments works
- Housing/rental
- Offering incentives to more staff e.g. temporary, casual
- Pathway to permanency
- A critique/mention of transfer points/ incentive transfers
- Introducing a guaranteed transfer/ certainty of transfer out
- Rental subsidy taken out of RTI misleading
- Other

6 (3.59%)
32 (19.16%)
58 (34.73%)
4 (2.4%)
7 (4.19%)
4 (2.4%)
8 (4.79%)
23 (13.77%)
25 (14.97%)

Appendix 8: List of Implementation Actions

1.1.1	Update and expand the calculation of the transfer points to account for a wider range of factors, more up-to-date measures of remoteness, service availability and difficulty of recruitment. Publish the methodology and drivers used, including development of specific thresholds for different types of perceived or actual inequity.
1.1.2	Implement a regular mechanism to review and update point allocations, to ensure that gradual changes in locations do not create long-term inequities in points allocations.
1.2.1	As part of the regular mechanism to review and update transfer points, track all complaints of inequity for the year and cross reference to have a formal mechanism for schools or the Department to review transfer point categorisations.
1.2.2	Broaden eligibility for the incentives scheme: apply the incentive scheme to all teaching staff at incentive schools (i.e. permanent and temporary teachers), where appropriate.
1.2.3	Consider a targeted recruitment bonus:-investigate and pilot earlier payment of a recruitment bonus to teach in high priority areas, to further reduce time taken to fill hard-to-staff roles.
1.2.4	Consider a one-off incentive payment for subject specific expertise to address teacher supply shortages in particular subjects.
1.3.1	Simplify existing incentives into a single incentive based on retention which is applicable to all staff based on time served at incentive schools. A first payment upon completion of three years and a second upon completion of five years. This incentive to be provided to all staff working at schools in rural and remote areas.
1.3.2	Replace the rental subsidy and location allowance with a single, up-to-date and comprehensive cost-of-living allowance based on where the teacher lives, not the location of the school where they teach. Target launch of the new cost-of-living allowance in 2023 with appropriate transition and grand-fathering of existing arrangements.
1.3.3	Review and update the new cost-of-living allowance as part of the overall regular review process.
1.4.1	Launch a What Works Program for leaders and teachers to submit ideas about improving the attraction and/ or retention of teachers. Pilot a selection of winning ideas and scale successful ideas more broadly.
2.1.1	Construct a specific annual process with principals to identify and invite appropriate final-year students at rural and remote schools to apply for the teach.Rural scholarship.
2.1.2	Introduce more detailed profiles and updated differential targeting strategies for teachers in metropolitan and inner regional areas who are in their late 20s and early 30s and have traits more likely to result in a successful rural placement in order for more proactive targeting to be used to fill rural and remote vacancies.
2.1.3	Introduce more detailed profiles and updated differential targeting strategies (in particular, using qualitative analysis of social and career needs) of experienced teachers in metropolitan and inner regional areas aged 40 and above who have traits that are likely to result in them having a successful rural placement so that proactive targeting can be used to fill rural and remote vacancies.
2.1.4	Ensure the proactive targeting mechanism is kept live and relevant through ongoing refinement and updating of teacher target profiles for rural and remote areas and monitoring the ongoing efficacy of targeting mechanisms.
2.1.5	Work with researchers to design a simple evidence-based tool to systemically aid candidate selection for rural and remote placements at various points (i.e. pre-practicum, pre-scholarship, pre-placement etc.).
2.1.6	Measure and report on actual versus forecast results (e.g. actual retention) on an annual basis.
2.2.1	Double the number of teach.Rural scholarships awarded to leverage strong existing demand, as funded through the Teacher Supply Strategy.
2.2.2	Expand teach.Rural scholarship eligibility to include rural and remote community members, particularly members of education staff (e.g. GSEs, SASSs and NSBTSs).
2.2.3	Build a direct mechanism to ensure that teach.Rural scholars are obliged to fill priority vacancies in rural and remote areas.
2.2.4	Develop an ongoing longitudinal monitoring regime for scholarship recipients' career trajectories, e.g. the number of years spent in each ASGS combined with measurement and evaluation of the impact of the scholarships

	program in addressing state-wide vacancies and teacher supply in these areas. Embed this in scholarship conditions.
2.2.5	Implement a complementary funding scheme, similar to New Zealand's VBS, that boosts teacher supply to rural and remote areas by providing incentives to graduates in return for choosing to locate to rural or remote areas.
2.3.1	Partner with universities to implement a specific pathway for existing education staff (e.g. SLSOs) to transition to teaching to address vacancies in their area upon course completion.
2.3.2	Consider strategies to support students from rural and remote areas to undertake teacher training and obtain employment in rural and remote areas including:Develop alternative entry pathways into pre-service training programs, and support structures, for rural students that address current entry barriers.
2.3.3	Develop a program giving rural and remote students the option to complete their teaching, degree whilst being based in their community, including a mechanism to subsequently obtain employment at government schools ideally within or near their rural or remote community (placement mechanism).
2.3.4	Enhanced focus on curriculum to support successful rural placements including partnering with universities to: Ensure the specific content required to enable a more successful rural placement is offered to students whilst they are undertaking a teaching qualification and potentially mandatory if they opt for a rural practicum and if they are a teach.Rural scholarship recipient.
2.3.5	Enhanced focus on curriculum to support successful rural placements including partnering with universities to: Develop a comprehensive suite of accredited rural and remote learning modules for teachers, including (but not limited to), how to teach a multi-level class, how to teach out of area, how to engage with the community and understanding rurality.
	Partner with universities to strategically influence practicum placements to meet supply challenges and promote student experience by:
2.3.6	Partner with universities to strategically influence practicum placements to meet supply challenges and promote student experience by: Targeting placements to areas where there is greatest need, such as vacancies. Where there is a positive fit, actively facilitate subsequent employment to those sites.
2.3.7	Utilising the standard candidate selection tool (recommended in 2.1.5) to partner with universities to proactively identify university students with appropriate traits and encourage them to undertake rural practicums.
2.3.8	Implementing a robust evaluation mechanism over the practicum program that calculates ongoing results and cost-benefits as well as post-practicum employment outcomes.
2.3.9	Centrally administering, standardising, and expanding the current rural and remote practicum program to ensure it contains evidence-based effectiveness elements, including arrangements for groups rather than just individuals. In the short term, focus on regional universities and targeting students who have had prior experience living in rural and remote areas.
2.3.10	Standardise the experience of students who undertake a rural practicum, ensuring they include a minimum set of evidence-based effective elements.
	As part of the Rural Experience Program administration:
2.4.1	Work directly with principals in metropolitan and inner regional areas to target suitable staff to participate in the rural experience program and facilitate group placements, based on target profiles developed (recommendations 2.1.2 and 2.1.3)
2.4.2	Implement an ongoing longitudinal monitoring regime for teachers who have participated in the rural experience program or trial placement to assess the performance of each of these mechanisms in enabling teacher attraction and retention in rural and remote areas. Include review of cost-benefits, tenure and career path.
2.5.1	Increase opportunities to access training and professional developing including: Implement mechanisms to reduce the travel and relocation requirements for those in rural and remote areas to access training and Professional Development; including implementing regional training hubs where practical.
2.6.1	Continue to enhance learning and development options to support leaders in rural and remote schools including:

	Work with the School Leadership Institute to design a short and targeted introduction to rural leadership course to prepare principals prior to a leadership role in a in rural and remote areas
2.6.2	Consider requiring mandatory completion of the above-mentioned modules prior to being placed in a rural or remote school.
	Build connection for new recruits to rural and remote areas by:
2.7.1	Establishing a clear and standardised, induction program with including key information from Head Office, run by the Principal of the school and their DEL with a local-focus on community engagement.
2.7.2	DELs to provide direct follow-up support to Principals in how to engage with the community and other government agencies.
3.1.1	Address interstate pain points such as different training and assessment requirements which hinder both employers and apprentices in places such as Broken Hill (serviced by providers from Victoria, NSW and SA) and other border towns.
3.1.2	Design a single state-wide classification of rural and remote area indicators.
3.1.3	Prioritise and agree on the five communities in greatest need of development support (e.g. highest vacancy issues).
3.1.4	Work with these five communities to identify and prioritise short term priority services and/ or amenities required and medium-term development needs (e.g. housing, transport).
3.1.5	Address short and medium-term priorities that have been identified.
3.1.6	A whole of government approach to support key workers including: Develop multi-agency, key-worker collective inductions where teachers are able to build relationships with other agencies from the outset.
3.1.7	Facilitate activities and other programs for new members who relocate to the community to help them build connections and better understand community needs and dynamics.
3.2.1	Select priority locations to pilot locally-developed-and-implemented approaches to facilitate easier family relocation. Commence with enabling partner employment for key workers. Update relevant policies to provide a commitment to actively case manage opportunities for partner employment. Department to review results of these pilots and plan to scale-up to other priority areas.
4.1.1	Expand the availability of housing in key locations, through either purchase, construction or market-subsidy models, to meet current levels of demand.
4.1.2	Invest in maintenance allocation to prevent the current cycle of portfolio degradation, to the degree required to reduce the renewals timeframes from ~60 years to 30 years.
4.1.3	Establish regular reporting over vacancy and under-utilisation rates of the teacher housing portfolio, investigating divergences as part of an active portfolio and demand-management strategy.
4.1.4	Establish and maintain an annual portfolio strategy by: Developing an explicit geographical prioritisation for the maintenance and development of teacher housing to ensure that decisions are being made strategically across the portfolio and in line with accurate demand projections.
4.1.5	Setting benchmarks and provide published monthly reporting on key system metrics such as utilisation, maintenance timeframes, property condition. Using these metrics, drive a portfolio strategy to optimise the overall portfolio utilisation and make overt decisions regarding under-utilised stock and efficiency at the portfolio level.
4.1.6	Prioritising and resourcing the development of the housing-demand model to rapidly and accurately inform the planning and prioritisation of maintenance, purchasing and construction of housing.
4.2.1	Government to commission options analysis and viability assessment for potential market-based mechanisms to address private rental market failure in remote areas; where ongoing demand for key-worker housing exists. Specifically, consider rental guarantees mechanisms for market landlords who provide long-term housing supply.

4.2.2	Government to consider a whole-of-government mechanism to review, coordinate and optimise key-worker housing in rural and remote areas, including a state-level view of forward demand and portfolio management. Additionally, this mechanism to interface with broader rural and remote strategies to ensure alignment.
4.3.1	Change the end-to-end application process for teacher housing accommodation and the rental subsidy to ensure teachers have a single point of contact, identified to them, in both stages of the process. Establish service levels and metrics include a dedicated escalation support function in the responsible central team (refer to recommendations under section 5) who have oversight.
4.3.2	Create a specific explanation of the benefits to teachers of sharing THA accommodation with other teachers and ensure this is included in the specific part of the application process where teachers nominate whether they wish to share.
5.1.1	Establish a single, central unit responsible for assisting with staffing challenges in rural and remote schools.
5.1.2	Establish clear governance between the policy coordination functions and key areas of service and support to the workforce, to ensure one strategic view of the rural and remote system exists.
5.1.3	A specific function be established to be responsible for program management and delivery of the recommendations in this report. This includes overall administration and coordination of the incentives scheme, including ownership, and to make full-scheme information easily accessible online as well as provide direct support and clarifications to principals and teachers.
5.1.4	A specific function be allocated to implement delivery, outcomes and financial monitoring and evaluation regime (including baseline and target metrics, longitudinal data gathering, quarterly published reporting) for this program of work.

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