

# Rural and Remote Education Strategy Implementation Plan

Progress report

July 2024

Attracting and retaining teachers in our regional, rural and remote schools is central to improving outcomes for our students.

Regional, rural and remote learning communities are a key equity group. Improving learning outcomes for students living in regional, rural and remote areas is a priority under Our Plan for NSW Public Education.

We have seen strong progress on the Rural and Remote Education Implementation Plan to date and will continue to drive improvements throughout

2024. By supporting our teachers and principals through the key initiatives – tailored housing support, strengthening professional connections, and rural and remote staffing support – we are taking steps to secure continuity of learning for our students.

We are also increasing transparency around the performance of programs being delivered across the department. This is part of our whole-of-system approach to enhance equity for regional, rural and remote learning communities.

We look forward to seeing continued improvements on the ground throughout the year as we deliver on the plan.

## How we are driving change



## Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we learn, work and live, paying respect to Elders past and present as teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories. We strive to ensure every NSW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander learner achieves their potential through education.



Key initiative

## Tailored housing support

Quality teacher housing is critical to attract and retain staff in rural and remote schools. This initiative aims to improve the processes, access and condition of teacher housing to enhance the experience of tenants.

### What we've done



#### Enhancing advocacy

Appointed Deb Summerhayes, Deputy Secretary Public Schools, to the Teacher Housing Authority Board to advance systemic improvements.



#### Improving teacher experience

Developed new, user-friendly webpages with enhanced guidance on processes and responsibilities, including repairs and maintenance.



#### Promoting teacher voice

Increased survey participation by 23% to inform the review of tenancy arrangements and engagement directly affecting teacher tenants.



#### Addressing future needs

Planned for a Term 3 teacher housing roundtable with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Housing to address issues and plan for the future.



**Pictured:** New mobile residence in Louth.

### Under the spotlight

#### New teacher housing rolls into Louth

The learning community at Louth in the state's west was pleased to take delivery of a new temporary residence earlier this year. The 2-bedroom van home will provide a short-term accommodation solution for visiting staff such as relief teachers and psychologists.

The mobile unit is the first of its kind commissioned by the department and is being piloted as a short-term solution where there is an immediate housing need.

**"It's been an amazing addition and means casual or visiting staff can stay on site and spend full days working with the staff and students."**

**- Leanne Simes, Relieving Principal Louth Public School**



Key initiative

## Strengthening professional connections

Taking part in face-to-face professional connection activities can improve the wellbeing and performance of staff in regional, rural and remote locations. This initiative focuses on improving the delivery of meaningful, contextualised support.

### Under the spotlight

#### Connection Days, Port Macquarie

The Port Macquarie Principal Connection Days in May were the first in a series of connection events being delivered across regional NSW this year. The sessions are an opportunity for regional, rural and remote school leaders to come together to strengthen connections, promote wellbeing and build leadership capability.

More than 30 school leaders attended the North Coast event, with over 95% agreeing the sessions provided useful strategies to support wellbeing and leadership capability.

**"The days demonstrate that the value of networking with peers lies in the exchange of ideas, experiences and support, which fosters professional growth and collaboration."**

**- Lisa Fahy, Principal Wyrallah Public School**

### What we've done



#### Shaping future delivery

Engaged with school leaders in shaping future direction through Rural and Regional Roadshows hosted by the department Executive.



#### Building leadership capacity

Launched a tailored Middle Leaders Development Program for staff in regional, rural and remote locations.



#### Providing support on the ground

Delivered 2 Principal Connection Days and 2 Early Career Teacher Connection Days in regional locations, with further events scheduled.

**Pictured:** School leaders at the Principal Connection Days in Port Macquarie.



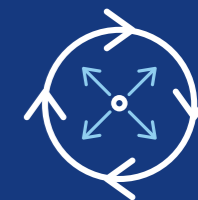


Key initiative

## Rural and remote staffing support

Recruitment activities add to the workload of school staff, particularly in rural locations with complex requirements. Additional recruitment support for schools will help streamline processes and provide greater consistency around the application of policies and incentives.

## Embedding a whole-of-system approach



In 2024 we are tracking the performance of the 14 programs listed below to ensure they are delivering meaningful results on the ground for regional, rural and remote learning communities.

### What we've done



#### Increasing tailored support

Expanded the priority recruitment support program to an additional 26 regional, rural and remote schools.



#### Improving allocation of incentives

Progressed the proposed Action Plan for rural and remote financial incentives following consultation, to ensure changes meet the needs of schools across the board.



#### Supporting local recruitment

Launched the Grow Your Own-Local Teacher Pipeline providing a teacher training pathway within regional communities.



#### Building capacity and skills

Worked with school leaders to inform the development of context-specific resources to assist schools with recruitment.



Pictured: Students at Barraba Central School.

### Under the spotlight

#### Priority recruitment success in Barraba

Barraba Central School in the state's north west has seen the benefit of the priority recruitment support model first hand. With the assistance of tailored support provided through the program, the school has been able to recruit much needed teachers, filling 6 vacancies since 2022. Having reached its recruitment goal the school has now transitioned off the program.

**“The best thing about the program has been having dedicated support from someone who knows our school and understands what we need.”**

**-Pat Sullivan, Principal Barraba Central School**

### Key area 1: People

#### Teachers in the Field – Classroom Cover Stream

This program provides temporary teaching opportunities at both individual schools and across hubs of schools in regional, rural and remote areas.

The program has recorded a participant satisfaction rating of 39%. Investigation indicates this has been influenced by the dissatisfaction of hub and spoke teachers with the travel expense claim process, which is being addressed.

Over **80%** of annual teacher target met by the end of Term 1 2024 with **65** teachers provided relief teaching to **199** schools. This is against a targets of **80** teachers and **287** schools.



Pictured: Students at Narrabri Public School.

#### RRR Middle Leadership Development Program

Program commenced in May 2024 with over **130** registrations across the first 2 cohorts (7 Principal Networks). The program will cover a total of **17** Principal Networks.

#### Rural Experience Program

**28** participants undertaking placements in rural schools in 2024 across **11** Principal Networks.

#### Rural and Remote Financial Incentives Review

**1,421** rural teacher incentive payments made in Term 2 2024 to attract and retain teachers against a target of **1,400\***.

\*Payments made in Term 2 2024 for service in Term 1 2024.

#### Rural and Remote Incentives

**284** relocation payments as at Term 1 2024, exceeding the target of **255**, with a **75%** satisfaction rating among recipients.

**25** stamp duty relief payments against a target of **23** with an **87%** satisfaction rating among recipients, as at Term 1 2024.

#### Grow Your Own – Local Teacher Pipeline

A new stream of Grow Your Own, the Local Teacher Pipeline, launched in 2024 with **19** of the **75** participants from regional, rural and remote areas.



## Key area 2: Practice

### Rural Learning Exchange

The Rural Learning Exchange supports teachers to deliver Stage 6 curriculum in rural and remote schools.

The focus in Term 3 will be on further supporting early career teachers and those teaching out of subject area to deliver quality Stage 6 learning across regional, rural and remote schools. The program will also offer its head teachers tailored professional learning through the RRR Middle Leadership Development Program.

75 teachers and 455 students supported as of Term 1, against annual targets of 100 and 500 respectively.



Over 70% of teachers felt their students were more supported as a result of the program.

### Innovating Careers Education

Program on track to reach annual target of 180 with 64 staff attending Career Immersion Team Meetings as of Term 1. 100% satisfaction rating among participants

28 participants took part in Innovating Careers Education Professional Learning as of Term 1 against an annual target of 80, with 83% satisfaction rating of participants.

## Key area 3: Participation

### Supporting the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce

Initiatives such as scholarship programs support the ECEC workforce across regional NSW. In response to a 2023 scholarship recipient survey, regional, rural and remote scholars stated it would be very helpful to have additional workplace support (74%), mentoring (65%), and peer support or networking (53%) to assist them during their studies.

Over 21% of scholarship applicants in the 2023-24 ECEC Scholarship Program were from regional, rural or remote areas.



55% of the 489 scholars surveyed were from regional, rural or remote areas.

### Clontarf Academy Program

81% of funded places filled against a target of 80%. Over 83% of students have a post-school plan in place+.

### National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Program (NASCA)

86% of funded places filled against a target of 80%. 65% of students have a post-school plan in place+.

### Supporting early childhood education service provision in regional, rural and remote locations

77.8% of 3- to 4-year-olds enrolled in an early childhood education program for 600 hours per year in the 2 years before school, against a target of 77.5%~.

+Data collected biannually, last collection December 2023.

~Based on annual data released in March 2024.

## Key area 4: Partnerships

### Regional Industry Education Partnerships

The Regional Industry Education Partnerships program helps students engage directly with industry to explore career paths or transition into work, apprenticeships and traineeships, or further study.

In February 2024 the program was approved as an ongoing service of Training Services NSW. Since April 2021 the program has delivered over 205,000 opportunities for students with over 3,300 employers across NSW.

56% of total opportunities undertaken by regional, rural and remote students against a target of 50%.



Over 81% overall satisfaction of students.

### Support for Country University Centres

Total of 1,556 student enrolments across Country University Centres in NSW, against a target of 1,500.+

Over 90% overall satisfaction rating of students.

+Data collected biannually, last collection December 2023.