

Extract from

Schooling in Rural Australia -

Commonwealth Schools Commission - November 1987

Pages 214 to 216

10.24 Recommendations made to the Commonwealth are listed below.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Commonwealth establish an Accommodation Support Scheme to provide annual per capita subsidies to hostels, group homes and boarding schools in rural areas, to support the provision of living away from home facilities for students who are geographically isolated from an appropriate government school. Under this scheme an annual per capita payment should be paid to approved accommodation facilities located in rural areas, for each student accommodated who meets the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme's (AIC) geographic isolation criterion. To encourage the development of small-scale, adaptable facilities, the payment for hostels, group homes and small boarding schools (ie. those boarding schools accommodating 40 or fewer boarders) should be set at a higher rate than that for large boarding schools (ie. those accommodating more than 40 boarders), with the initial levels of payment being \$500 per annum and \$200 per annum respectively. (Paragraph 4.49)

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that the Commonwealth examine the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme (AIC) to determine ways of making the Scheme a more effective means of the Commonwealth providing support for the schooling of remote area children. This examination should consider the Scheme's eligibility criteria, especially the specifications concerning distance and students undertaking special courses, its allowance levels, and the contribution it makes to the education of rural students (Paragraph 4.88)

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the Commonwealth provide funding of \$0.6m per annum for three years to the Curriculum Development Centre, for the establishment of a priority area in Rural Schools Curriculum Development. Projects supported through the priority area should be directed at subject areas which are difficult to staff in rural locations, distance education materials for secondary students studying at home or in small rural schools by distance education means, and curriculum materials for senior secondary study. (Paragraph 5.54)

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that two changes be made to AUSTUDY provisions as applied to students who have undertaken all of their secondary schooling in remote areas and who, having just completed Year 12, undertake an additional year of secondary schooling in a larger centre of population in order to facilitate their transition to employment or further study:

- (i) for students in this situation who are aged 16-18 in their additional year of schooling and who are otherwise eligible for AUSTUDY, the living allowance should be payable at the 'away-from-home' rate applicable to tertiary students of their age; and
- (ii) for students in this situation who are aged 19 or over at 1 January of their additional year of schooling, the prohibition against AUSTUDY assistance being paid to adult secondary students repeating a level of study should be waived. (Paragraph 5.61)

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the Commonwealth establish a Rural-Urban Student Exchange Scheme to encourage exchanges between students in the middle years of secondary schooling in remote areas or small provincial towns and students at the same level of schooling in large provincial centres or metropolitan areas. The scheme should be trialled for a three-year period and should operate through 'sister school' or 'sister area' arrangements. The student exchanges should be for periods of from one month to one school term. Commonwealth funding of \$1m per annum should be provided to support the scheme during the trial period. (Paragraph 5.66)

Recommendation 6: it is recommended that Commonwealth funding of \$0.2m per annum over two years be made available through the Curriculum Development Centre for the development and dissemination of a comprehensive inservice package for teachers and principals on effective practices in the schooling of Aboriginal students. (Paragraph 6.67)

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that the Commonwealth encourage the development of and provide financial support for off-campus teacher education programs for mature age students in rural towns, designed to help increase the proportion of teachers in rural schools who are long-term rural residents. (Paragraph 7.22)

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the Commonwealth provide funding of \$0.5m per annum for three years to:

- (i) establish a task force to
 - advise on the development of teacher inservice materials and curriculum initiatives designed to support rural schools and education services to isolated students, through improved and economical access to communication technologies;
 - investigate and report on the provision of high quality communication links to schools through broadcasting, telecasting, land-lines and satellite links;
 - coordinate efforts among governments and education authorities to ensure that the next generation of satellites is designed and constructed to provide for the full range of educational purposes; and
 - encourage collaboration among the States and Territories, and between them and the Commonwealth, in efforts to use technology more effectively in rural schooling;

- (ii) provide support funding for initiatives relating to the development and sharing of existing and new curriculum materials for rural secondary students, and materials for the inservice education of rural teachers, which can be delivered using communication technologies;
- (iii) provide support funding for initiatives which address the special needs of students in the remote areas of central and northern Australia, especially for a curriculum that acknowledges the bilingual needs and traditional lifestyles of Aboriginal students. (Paragraph 8.37)

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that funds of \$2.65m per annum, additional to current allocations, be provided for three years to fund a specific element within the Country Areas Program (CAP) to support regional initiatives aimed at improving school retention rates in rural areas. (Paragraph 9.84)

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the funding for the Country Areas Program (CAP) be increased by 20 per cent for 1989 to make possible new activities and the intensification and expansion of particularly successful existing activities, this increase to be in addition to any increases to the CAP's funding allocation resulting from Recommendations 5 and 9 of this report. (Paragraph 9.89)