

## **Election Commitment for Two Teachers in Small Schools**

Increased demands are being placed on teachers in small schools. The responsibilities are enormous and, in many cases, proving to be unsustainable. It is timely that there is a commitment to lower the enrolment requirements for the allocation of two full-time teachers in small schools from 21 to 16 enrolments. The implementation of State Delivered Kindergarten has meant that in some schools, children in a multi age classroom now range in age from 3-12 years and can potentially be spread across eight-year levels while learning in one classroom. Children's diverse range and learning requirements add significantly to the workload of a single teacher responsible for the learning outcomes of all students. The ability to attract and retain staff in rural areas is becoming increasingly challenging due to unrealistic demands being placed on teachers in small schools. By increasing the teacher to student ratio, individual educational goals become more achievable and attraction and retention of quality staff more likely.

## **Election Commitment for Administrative Support for Principals in Small Schools**

In addition to planning and teaching, the workload for a teaching Principal in a one teacher setting extends beyond the classroom to administration, business management, parent engagement, reporting and a variety of operational tasks that would generally be shared with other staff in larger schools. Principals offering State Delivered Kindergarten in their school have additional reporting, compliance, planning and administration duties, all of which require time to undertake. The collective requirements of these duties draw heavily on Principal's time, allowing them less time to spend on teaching students. The overburden of administrative tasks, coupled with ordinary teaching requirements, can lead to staff burnout and job dissatisfaction. By providing Principals with full-time administrative support various pressures would be alleviated. Students would benefit from more face-to-face teaching, resulting in better educational outcomes.

## **Election Commitment for Distance Education Supervisor Subsidy (DESS)**

Currently, Geographically Isolated (GI) families that educate their children via Distance Education must provide a supervisor. In 80% of circumstances, the mother becomes the supervisor, she is taken out of the workforce. The supervisor needs to commit 6-8 hours per day to the role. This role requires dedication and commitment and can last many years. If the mother takes on this role, she will not receive any remuneration, superannuation, or professional recognition for the vital role she has played in the education of her children. This supervisor role is equivalent to a Teacher Aide in a mainstream class, but this person will not be remunerated. If a supervisor is employed by the family, remuneration costs an average of \$70,000 per year. When children in urban areas start school, it is an opportunity for parents to return to work and increase their income capacity. For rural families, it is the start of ongoing additional expense for the compulsory education of their children. For equity in education for all Queensland students, rural families are entitled to assistance with the cost of educating their children. The introduction of a Distance Education Supervisor Subsidy (DESS) of forty thousand dollars per year paid in quarterly installments will significantly offset the costs associated with supervising students in their home classroom.

## **Election Commitment for access to a Senior Agricultural Boarding High School**

All Queensland students should be granted the opportunity to understand from where their food and fibre originates. In this proposed school, Agriculture would be at the forefront of foundational learning. Agriculture would be a compulsory subject for all students in Years 7 to 10 and offered as an elective subject for Years 11 and 12. A more in-depth focus on agriculture and agricultural practices would not only enhance awareness but give opportunity for the acquisition of a greater depth and breadth of knowledge and development of practical, transferrable skills. There would be an opportunity for the students to experience, in a broad sense, all components of agriculture to assist them to identify where their interests and strengths lie. Years 11 and 12 would offer more specific pathways, whilst the student continues to achieve relevant academic results. This would result in formal vocational outcomes supported by workplace/industry pathways and experience.

Academic learning would be recognised and weighted the same as industry placement with relevant and appropriate training with course materials provided to increase the success of students and enable them to transition successfully from school to work. When students gain experience, knowledge, and skills through a specific Agricultural high school this enhances not only the positive academic outcomes but employment opportunities, skills development and pathways that are relevant and required by rural employers.

The provision of suitable boarding facilities (co-educational) would provide the opportunity for a student, regardless of their original locality to access learning, develop and grow a sense of community and engage a support network for learning, work and future pathways.

There is clearly a demonstrated need with Agricultural High schools with boarding facilities in NSW and WA at capacity. Families are calling for more facilities to be built to cope with demand. Students who complete an education at an Agricultural high school will be ready to work and able to fill a gap in a key area of the Australian economy which is in dire need of skilled employees.

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