

# Rural and Remote Education

## Great teachers and school leaders

### Current State

- Sometimes, teachers are not sure that a move to a rural and remote location will work for them.
- Rural and remote schools find it difficult to attract and retain teachers and leaders. Some schools are unable to fill executive positions despite multiple merit selection processes.
- Teachers and principals in metropolitan schools have on average more experience than teachers and principals in rural and remote schools.
- Rural and remote schools may have only one suitably qualified teacher in some curriculum areas and, in some schools, teachers may be asked to teach courses for which they have little or no formal training.
- Geographic isolation and school size limits the opportunities for teachers, school leaders and support staff to work together, and collaborate with others.
- Teachers and leaders in rural and remote schools have limited experience with NAPLAN and HSC marking.

### Future State

- Newly appointed teachers and leaders in rural and remote schools can be offered a 10 week trial before their permanent appointment is confirmed.
- A new range of incentives attract more of the best and brightest into teaching and retain quality teachers and leaders in rural and remote schools.
- Teachers and principals in rural and remote areas access new mentoring and coaching programs, including the opportunity to work alongside experienced school leaders.
- Virtual faculties and mentoring and shadowing programs link teachers in rural and remote schools to subject expertise.
- Teachers, school leaders and support staff access an increased range of opportunities for professional learning and collaboration, online and face-to-face.
- Teachers and leaders have increased opportunities to experience real or simulated NAPLAN and HSC marking.

### 2014

### 2015

### 2016

### 2017

A range of new incentives available to attract and retain quality teachers and leaders to rural and remote areas.

All permanent beginning teachers in their first year of teaching are supported with the equivalent of two hours release time and one hour of mentoring support per week.

As for 2014, plus all permanent beginning teachers in their second year of teaching are supported with the equivalent of one hour release time per week.

As for 2014 and 2015

Rural and remote schools with significant numbers of temporary teachers are supported by additional teacher mentors.

An increased range of professional learning, coaching and mentoring programs available to teachers, school leaders and other staff.

More rural and remote teachers participate in real and simulated NAPLAN and HSC marking experiences.

Rural and remote Learning and Support and ESL teachers linked to other teachers via virtual faculties.

More virtual faculties established.

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## FAQ: Great teachers and school leaders

### Q1 What are the *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning* reforms?

In March 2013, the NSW Government released *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A blueprint for action* – a document that outlined 16 reforms across the whole career cycle of a teacher. These reforms include actions to strengthen professional experience placements, introduce new *teach*.Rural scholarships, cadetships and internships and provide increased support for beginning teachers. Further information on these reforms can be found at [www.dec.nsw.gov.au/our-services/schools/great-teaching-inspired-learning](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/our-services/schools/great-teaching-inspired-learning)

### Q2 What incentives are currently available to staff in rural and remote locations?

The Department currently offers a range of incentives to help staff rural and remote schools. These include: rental subsidies; reimbursement of certain expenses related to medical or dental treatment and vacation travel expenses; and eligibility for priority transfer to a school in a location of choice after a specified period of employment. Also available is a locality allowance (climatic disability, isolation from socio-economic goods and services or motor vehicle). The *teach*.NSW benefits calculator has a listing of benefits and allowances applicable to each NSW public school – see [www.teach.nsw.edu.au/calculator](http://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/calculator)

Under current arrangements, teachers in four-point incentive schools are not eligible to claim any rental subsidy. One of the new incentives under the Rural and Remote blueprint gives teachers in these schools access to claiming a 50 per cent rental subsidy.

### Q3 What are transfer points for schools? How many eight-point and six-point incentive schools are there?

Transfer points are allocated to schools based on their location and are one factor used to rank teachers applying for transfer. The higher the points, the more isolated the school.

The highest point rating allocated to schools is eight. The transfer points allocated to schools can be found at [www.teach.nsw.edu.au/documents/schstaffingareas.xls](http://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/documents/schstaffingareas.xls) and the list of eight-point and six-point incentive schools can be found in the Promotions and Transfer Procedures booklet, available online at [www.teach.nsw.edu.au/documents/procedures12.pdf](http://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/documents/procedures12.pdf)

### Q4 When can a principal directly appoint a teacher into an executive role?

A principal cannot directly appoint a teacher into an executive role. However, under these new incentives, where a principal of a rural and remote eight-point incentive school has a teacher who has relieved or acted in a vacant executive position for more than two continuous years, the principal can recommend to their Director Public Schools NSW that the teacher should be assessed for direct appointment to the position in which they have been relieving or acting.

### Q5 Will all vacancies in rural and remote eight-point incentive schools have a \$10,000 recruitment benefit?

No. A recruitment benefit of \$10,000 to an eight-point incentive school vacancy may only apply if two consecutive selection processes have failed to fill a vacancy.

### Q6 How will teachers be offered the 10 week trial?

When a new employee accepts a teacher appointment to a rural and remote school, the confirmation of permanency will be held for 10 weeks. During this period, the teacher can decide if he/she is suited to living and working in the location. Where a teacher currently employed by the Department gains an executive position in a rural and remote school, again there will be a 10 week period for the teacher to decide if he/she is suited to living and working in the location. Their previous position will not be filled during this time. Should the teacher decide not to continue in the rural and remote school, he/she will be able to return to their previous substantive position.

## Q7 How does the rental subsidy payment work?

In general, teachers are expected to find their own accommodation. Teachers serving in country areas, however, often have difficulty in finding suitable accommodation in towns where there is a shortage of satisfactory rental housing. To assist them, the Teacher Housing Authority (THA) maintains a number of houses and villa units throughout the state at market rental rates.

The Department provides rental subsidies to those teachers in eight-point and six-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 privately rent.

The rental subsidy paid is 90 per cent for teachers at eight-point schools, and 70 per cent for teachers at six-point schools. Conditions apply and teachers should refer to the rental subsidy information sheet for full details available at [www.teach.nsw.edu.au/documents/rental\\_subsidy\\_info.doc](http://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/documents/rental_subsidy_info.doc)

From next year, teachers in four-point incentive schools will also be able to claim a 50 per cent rental subsidy.

## Q8 Who will pay the Institute of Teachers' submission fee for teachers?

The Department will reimburse all teachers in rural and remote schools who are successful in being accredited as Highly Accomplished or Lead teachers their accreditation submission fee.

## Q9 How will the short-term shadowing opportunities for newly appointed school leaders in rural and remote areas work?

The rural and remote mentoring program will include a two-week shadowing opportunity where newly appointed and long-term relieving school leaders will work alongside an experienced school leader. The location for this professional development will be chosen on a case by case basis, depending on the particular needs of the newly appointed leader. Relief, travel, accommodation and meal costs will also be provided, where appropriate.

## Q10 Where can teachers and school staff find out more about the new professional learning, coaching and mentoring opportunities that will be available from next year?

All new opportunities will be promoted on the Rural and Distance Education website [www.schools.nsw.edu.au/rde/](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/rde/). By the end of this year, existing opportunities will also be added to this website to provide a 'one stop' site for rural and remote schools.

## Q11 What is a virtual faculty?

In many small rural and remote schools, there may only be one teacher teaching a subject and so they will have limited collegial support. Virtual faculties use a range of technologies to link teachers with their colleagues in other schools who have that particular curriculum expertise. Virtual faculties are already successfully operating in some rural and remote schools. From 2014, this model will be expanded to include linking Learning and Support and ESL teachers via virtual faculties to colleagues in other schools.