Rural and Remote Education Framework for Action

2003–2005

Minister's Foreword

Queensland is recognised as a world leader in providing education to students living in rural and remote areas. However, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels.

It is essential we refine our services to respond to the many social, technological and economic changes that can impact on rural education.

The State Government is committed to improving retention rates and literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in rural and remote communities.

More than 40 priority actions have been identified to be implemented or considered over the next three years under the Rural and Remote Framework for Action.

We have listened to the concerns of isolated parents and we are delivering.

The Framework provides a policy context for Education Queensland to work with key stakeholders, through the recently established Rural and Remote Education Committee, to develop and deliver the next generation of innovation.

Our Government knows that education is the key to ensuring continued personal, social and economic well-being.

Students and schools in rural and remote Queensland will continue to be state leaders.

This action plan is about working smarter to give rural and remote students a better educational deal.

Anna Bligh MP
Education Minister

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Introduction

Background

Rural and remote areas of Queensland make a major contribution to the Queensland economy. The continuing strength of our rural economy depends on a vibrant, skilled workforce capable of sustaining rural development while at the same time embracing global trends. Quality education services in the bush are an important part of this future.

Over half of all state schools in Queensland are located in rural and remote areas. These schools cater for approximately one-third of all students enrolled in the state school system.

Living and learning in rural and remote areas offers unique advantages and opportunities for students and teachers. In many country areas, the local school is the hub of the community and the site for many community activities. As enrolments and populations are often small, school communities tend to be tight-knit and supportive. Teachers are likely to know students and their extended families well, and students are likely to know their peers well, both in a school and a community context.

School environments in rural and remote areas are often characterised by:

- Well-developed pastoral relationships with the local community;
- A strong sense of belonging to the school and the broader community;
- A sense of safety; and
- Creative partnerships with local community organisations, businesses and industries for building innovative learning environments and experiences for students. Partnerships being fostered out of a commitment to the wellbeing of fellow community members.

Queensland as world leader

Queensland has always been regarded as a world leader in the provision of quality education services to students living in rural and remote areas. Schools in these areas of our state are among the most innovative in Queensland and, in many cases, Australia.

To maintain its leadership in the field of rural and remote education, Education Queensland has a continuing commitment to identify new challenges as they arise and to develop innovative and responsive education and training solutions.

The Rural and Remote Education Framework for Action is about continuing to refine and improve our quality rural and remote education services. It outlines a commitment to engaging with the key and emerging challenges of delivering education in the bush and achieving better learning outcomes for students living in rural and remote locations.

Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF)

While the Framework for Action explores strategies for addressing a wide range of issues, a key focus is the delivery of the ETRF reform agenda.

Through the Smart State agenda, the Queensland Government is responding to the changing social and economic environments by creating an education and training system that establishes lifelong learning processes to enable all students to become active citizens in a learning society.

The recently released Education and Training Reforms for the Future: A White Paper (ETRF White Paper) outlines the blueprint for achieving this vision.

This package of reforms aims to:
- Improve the early and middle phases of schooling;
- Provide teachers and students with increased access to information and communication technologies for learning; and
- Increase the achievement, retention rates and post-compulsory pathways for young people aged 15–17 years.

Education Queensland recognises that rural and remote communities will face particular challenges in accessing and implementing these reforms.

Action 9 of the ETRF White Paper outlines the Government's commitment to working with communities to develop localised services and better access to education and training for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

Schools will work actively with their local communities to identify issues of mutual concern and generate innovative responses that build on community capacity. Education Queensland will foster relationships and partnerships with

local community groups, government and non-government agencies and industry to support schools in delivering flexible individualised learning and training opportunities for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

Contexts for learning and delivering education services in rural and remote areas

The Rural and Remote Education Framework for Action recognises that the characteristics of rural and remote communities are diverse, and that the learning contexts and needs of students in these communities are varied. Rural and remote education in Queensland encompasses a number of settings including:

• Distance education;

• Small primary schools;

• Schools in provincial towns;

• Schools in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and

• P–10 and P–12 schools in rural and remote areas.

As well as the more traditional schooling subjects, learning programs will include Vocational Education and Training conducted in schools and in workplaces; specialised programs for students with disabilities; programs for students with a language other than English as their first language and support for students who undertake their learning away from home.

Distance education

Education Queensland continues to support and enhance distance education programs and delivery methods for students who live in locations where attending a school is impossible, and as a way to increase the range of curriculum options of students in small secondary schools.

Small primary schools

There are over 500 small primary schools in rural and remote areas of Queensland, demonstrating Education Queensland's commitment to education service delivery in small communities across the state. While these schools face unique challenges in attracting and retaining staff, in managing multi-age curriculum delivery and meeting administrative requirements, they offer highly individualised learning contexts for students in small communities.

Schools in provincial towns

Successful models for collaboration in curriculum planning, resource management and effective use of local expertise have been implemented in many provincial centres. Further opportunities exist for innovative partnerships and alliances across state and non-state schools and across primary and secondary schools.

Schools in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

This Framework articulates closely with the Partners for Success initiative to deliver improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in all schools, including those in rural and remote communities.

P–10 and P–12 schools in rural and remote areas

Secondary students at P–10 or small P–12 schools in rural and remote areas also face unique challenges. They may have limited curriculum and vocational education and training options, and may also have to travel long distances or live away from home in order to continue learning. Expanding their opportunities for success will involve consideration of distance or virtual schooling delivery modes, and partnerships with industry and training providers. Innovative virtual campus models can offset social and academic isolation by building larger student communities.

The challenges

The Rural and Remote Education Framework for Action builds on the principles and intent of the National Framework for Rural and Remote Education (2001) developed by the MCEETYA Taskforce on Rural and Remote Education and adapts its essential enablers to address the key challenges for education in rural and remote areas of Queensland. Targets and actions are being developed in the following priority action areas:

• Relevant and Engaged Learning;

• Respecting Cultural Diversity;

• ICTs and Multimodal Delivery;

- Personnel and Workforce Capability; and
- Environments and Resourcing.

Relevant and Engaged Learning

Challenge: To maintain and improve the attendance, retention and achievement of students in rural and remote communities, the curriculum must be relevant and engaging and meet the diverse needs of students.

MCEETYA research shows that curriculum best meets the needs of rural and remote students when:

- Programs are developed in partnership with the local community that are responsive to local community needs and meet the requirements of a global society;
- Curriculum is aligned with the requirements of the National Goals of Schooling and are appropriately applied to the local context; and
- Educational options and pathways in schools are designed to articulate with training and employment pathways.

The Framework for Action addresses specifically the need to:

- Improve attendance rates for rural and remote students;
- Improve learning and training pathways and retention rates, especially in the senior phase of learning;
- 'Unclutter' the curriculum to provide more space and time for students to achieve deeper understanding and higher levels of engagement in learning;
- Promote greater curriculum consistency across classrooms and schools, and greater continuity across year levels; and
- Provide more engaging and intellectually challenging learning and teaching.

Respecting Cultural Diversity

Challenge: To deliver improved levels of achievement and respect for cultural diversity for all students in rural and remote schools.

Diversity is at the core of every school community. Education Queensland is committed to recognising and valuing diversity in our schools and workplaces and promoting inclusiveness in our everyday practices so that all Queenslanders can participate and succeed in education, training and employment.

The Partners for Success strategy is the key policy initiative developed by Education Queensland to address the education and employment needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland.

The Partners for Success Action Plan identifies priority action areas for improving learning outcomes of Indigenous students. These areas – improving attendance, literacy achievement, retention, and developing the workforce – complement and support the targeted action areas of the Rural and Remote Education Framework for Action.

The Framework for Action and Partners for Success Action Plan address specifically the need for all schools to:

- Improve attendance rates for Indigenous students;
- Improve learning and training pathways and retention rates, especially in the senior phase of learning;
- Foster inclusive classroom practices which respect, support and incorporate the diversity of ALL students' cultural backgrounds, experiences and abilities;
- Create supportive learning environments where difference is viewed positively and group identities are valued;
- Build partnerships with Indigenous parents and communities; and
- Develop the capacity of principals and teachers to provide support for cultural identity through access to cross-cultural training.

ICTs and Multimodal Delivery

Challenge: To increase and extend the education and training options of students in rural and remote areas using ICTs and a range of curriculum delivery methods.

Distance and population size and range of choice mean that not all curricula will be available through face-to-face methods. The diversity of rural and remote locations needing quality education services requires a multimodal approach to delivery.

While ICTs are strategic modes for extending students' access to education and training options, face-to-face instruction and support from dedicated and skilled teachers is considered to be an essential component of successful learning.

The Framework for Action specifically addresses the need to:

- Use distance, online, and virtual education as well as video-conferencing as strategic modes of delivering flexible individualised learning and training opportunities for young people in rural and remote areas;
- Provide affordable and accessible broadband Internet services for rural and remote locations;
- Expand and upgrade infrastructure and provide reliable technical support;
- Take advantage of opportunities for sharing ICT infrastructure, where appropriate;
- Ensure equitable access to quality online curriculum materials that are inclusive of rural and remote contexts and circumstances;
- Provide ICT training and development for staff; and
- Identify and share successful models of multimodal delivery.

Personnel and Workforce Capability

Challenge: To recruit and retain a teaching and administrative workforce with the capability and flexibility to deliver high quality education services and opportunities for rural and remote students.

Teachers and principals in rural and remote schools face specific challenges including working with multi-age classes, increased administrative responsibilities, a high degree of graduate placement and teacher turnover, and adjusting to life in a geographically remote location.

The Framework for Action specifically addresses the need to:

- Improve recruitment and retention of teachers in rural and remote areas;
- Facilitate a two-way exchange between Education Queensland staff and local rural and remote communities;
- Recognise the differential workloads of principals and teachers in rural and remote schools and establish the right staffing mix to deliver high quality education services for rural and remote students;
- Provide support for systemic planning, administration and curriculum implementation in small schools; and

- Enhance rural and remote teachers' access to relevant learning and development programs to ensure they are up to date in all areas of their work.

Environments and Resourcing

Challenge: To build community capacity and facilitate partnerships for creating innovative learning environments and efficient resourcing arrangements in rural and remote areas.

The provision of quality education in rural and remote Queensland requires creative and flexible approaches that utilise leadership capacity at all levels, government and non-government collaboration, whole-of-district organising and community engagement.

It is acknowledged that the fundamental capacity of a rural or remote community to build and support learning environments will vary significantly throughout Queensland.

The Framework for Action specifically addresses the need to:

- Develop new models of collaboration and coordination across primary, secondary schools and training providers;
- Ensure equity and efficiency of resource allocation to best meet the needs of students in rural and remote schools;
- Take advantage of opportunities for sharing ICT infrastructure, where appropriate;
- Build partnerships between stakeholders from both within and among neighbouring communities so that effects caused through small populations are minimised;
- Increase community involvement to facilitate sustainability; and
- Enhance cooperation and integration to improve student pathways.

Key targets for 2005

Key targets will be developed in Term 4 2003 in consultation with the Rural and Remote Reference Group. Targets will be developed for each of the following key priority action areas/challenges. They will be stated clearly and able to be measured and reported on.

- Relevant and Engaged Learning;
- Respecting Cultural Diversity;
- ICTs and Multimodal Delivery;

- Personnel and Workforce Capability; and
- Environments and Resourcing.

When developed, targets will be included within existing Destination 2010 target and performance measurement processes. It is envisaged that targets will be communicated to schools before the end of the 2003 school year with measurement against targets beginning in 2004.

Priority Action Areas – Meeting the challenges

In meeting the challenges outlined earlier in the Framework, Education Queensland will ensure that there is greater alignment and coordination of continuing activities and that any planned new activities articulate to the Framework and in particular to the Priority Action Areas.

In addition to continuing and planned and funded new activity, the following section of the Framework also includes a number of proposed innovations. These innovations are included to generate discussion and feedback. It is important to understand that the proposed innovations are currently being costed and a determination will need to be made with regards to the timing of their introduction.

Principles

All actions outlined in this section are underpinned by the following principles:
- Working smarter – cutting down on duplication in planning and administrative processes;
- Sharing success;
- Creating networks;
- Encouraging innovation;
- Building community ownership and capacity; and
- Working more closely with other government agencies and with the non-government schooling sector.

Priority Action Area 1 – Relevant and Engaged Learning

Challenge: To maintain and improve the attendance, retention and achievement of students in rural and remote communities, the curriculum must be relevant and engaging and meet the diverse needs of students.

Education Queensland's Response
Relevant curriculum
Action 1 – New Basics trial

Education Queensland will continue to trial New Basics in 2004 in 24 rural and remote schools. New Basics is an integrated framework of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting that aims to increase the proportion of Queensland students who complete Year 12 by reducing alienation in the middle years of schooling. The futures-oriented New Basics Curriculum is organised under four headings that cut across traditional disciplines: life pathways and social futures; multiliteracies and communications media; active citizenship; environment and technologies.

Action 2 – Literate Futures implementation

Education Queensland will continue to implement the Literate Futures project to ensure that all students develop the literacy skills they need to be successful in their school, work, social, civic and personal lives now and in the future. To date, all state schools have developed whole-school literacy strategies to improve student literacy outcomes. During 2003–2005, schools will work to achieve improved outcomes for students and ensure that all teachers participate in learning and development programs on the teaching of reading.

Action 3 – Middle Phase of Learning Core Curriculum project

Education Queensland will introduce the Middle Phase of Learning Core Curriculum project. This project will:
- Define the range, balance and continuity of learnings that will comprise the core curriculum in Years 4–9; and
- Establish trials of clustered teachers developing sample work programs;
- 'Uncluttering' the middle phase curriculum in state schools will provide more space and time for students to achieve deeper understanding and higher levels of engagement in learning. This will be accompanied by greater curriculum consistency across classrooms and schools, and greater continuity across year levels.

Special needs

Action 4 – Support for students with disabilities

Education Queensland will continue to provide case support, policy advice and professional learning programs for specialist teachers in rural and remote areas who are working with students with disabilities. This is achieved through:

- Specialist support personnel (advisory visiting teachers, therapists and guidance officers) and specialist teachers accessing learning development through the Disability Services Support Unit (DSSU) in Brisbane or the newly established Central/Northern DSSU in Rockhampton;
- Specialist support personnel and specialist teachers participating in synchronous and asynchronous online learning development sessions (coordinated through the DSSU) on specialist disability topics;
- Specialist teachers accessing the services of the Learning and Development Centre – ICTs – Students with Disabilities, which is part of the DSSU. This centre works directly with local staff and also works collaboratively with other Learning and Development Centres around the state to develop teachers' understanding of and skills in using assistive technologies within classroom contexts; and
- Students with disabilities, their families and teachers continuing to have access to outreach clinics for low vision, auditory learning, and orientation and mobility training organised from the DSSU.

Action 5 – Therapy Services Coordination project

Education Queensland will continue to participate in a joint project with Queensland Health and Disability Services Queensland to establish a more coordinated approach to service provision for people with disabilities in Queensland. Initially, the project will focus on identifying issues and options for developing more coordinated approaches for the delivery of occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech language pathology services. The project will examine current models of service delivery in the areas of Ipswich, Toowoomba and south-west Queensland.

Action 6 – Trial online support services for students with disabilities in remote areas (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will investigate the trialling of delivering online support services for students with disabilities who attend schools in remote areas that do not have ready access to local specialist teachers and specialist support personnel. This service will complement the visiting specialist support services that are provided to these schools. The trial would also explore the provision of online support services to students with disabilities who access their education at home through a School of Distance Education.

Distance education

Action 7 – Trial preparatory year in distance education

Education Queensland will trial the delivery of a preparatory year in distance education in 2004. In 2003, the focus is on developing support materials for distance education teachers and home tutors to implement the draft *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines*.

Action 8 – Remote Curriculum Enhancement option

Education Queensland will provide an option to students attending remote and very remote schools with highly modified curriculum to access Distance Education to facilitate them receiving a more appropriate curriculum. In some remote and very remote communities, the school's curriculum is modified in ways that best meet the educational needs and circumstances of the majority of children in that community – for example, the curriculum may be delivered in a language other than English. All applications for Remote Curriculum Enhancement will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis through the local school principal. Students receiving this option will be entitled to the same standard of service provided to the geographically isolated category of distance education enrolment. The provision of distance education materials and teaching from a School of Distance Education will be provided free of charge and delivered to the student at and through their local state school.

Action 9 – Trial secondary school coordinated through a regional School of Distance Education

Education Queensland will trial in 2004 coordination of secondary school offerings for Years 11 and 12 home-based geographically isolated learners through the Charters Towers School of Distance Education (SDE). This project will build on the school's existing partnerships with the local state high school, the Brisbane School of Distance Education, TAFE providers, registered training organisations and the Open Learning Institute to ensure there are appropriate local learning and training pathways for secondary students enrolled at the school. The trial will enable the school to provide greater continuity, improved pastoral care and better access to a range of academic and vocational education programs that reflect student aspirations and regional employment opportunities.

This trial may be expanded to other SDEs in 2005.

More options and flexibility for young people

Action 10 – School-based apprenticeships and traineeships

Education Queensland will continue to facilitate school-based apprenticeship and traineeship programs, which enable students to study for their Senior Certificate and, at the same time, undertake paid work and receive recognised training. Students in rural and remote regions who participate in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships have the opportunity to train in a wide range of industries that they might not otherwise be able to access.

Action 11 – Expand VET pathways

Education Queensland will continue to expand the vocational education and training pathways for students studying at rural and remote Indigenous P–10 schools through the ETRF trial.

Action 12 – Survey all P–10 schools

Education Queensland will survey all P–10 schools and smaller P–12 schools in rural and remote areas to collect comprehensive data on the local pathways available to students after they complete their education. The analysis of survey results will assist Education Queensland to understand the learning pathways of young people across all rural and remote communities, to identify barriers to education and training, and to facilitate better access to vocational education and training opportunities for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

Action 13 – Workshop for P–10 principals

Education Queensland will convene workshops for principals of P–10 schools and smaller P–12 schools in rural and remote areas to discuss strategies for developing localised services to improve learning options and pathways for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

Action 14 – Build cross-sectoral partnerships

Education Queensland will continue to facilitate cross-sectoral partnerships in rural and remote areas to find community solutions that enhance opportunities for young people to complete Year 12 or equivalent and make the transition to work or further study. In the ETRF trial areas these partnerships are being enabled through the formation of local management committees comprising stakeholders from the education, training, youth, community, business and local government sectors. The trial areas will develop District Youth Achievement Plans that set local targets for participation, retention and attainment in education, training or employment programs.

Priority Action Area 2 – Respecting Cultural Diversity

Challenge: To maintain and improve the attendance, retention and achievement of students in Indigenous communities, the curriculum must be relevant, engaging, value cultural diversity, embedded in local community contexts and meet the diverse needs of students.

Education Queensland's Response
Schools in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
Action 15 – Partners for Success implementation

Education Queensland will, through the *Partners for Success Action Plan*, implement programs that improve the attendance, retention and literacy

achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the middle years.

Strategies include:
- New approaches to teaching and learning in the middle years of schooling;
- Investigating and determining, with parents and local community members, pedagogy surrounding the teaching of literacy to Indigenous students;
- Implementing ESL Band scales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- Implementing targeted actions and strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities in district ETRF processes (for ICTs, early education, middle phase of schooling and senior schooling); and
- Developing the capacity of principals and teachers to provide leadership in Indigenous education and support for cultural identity through access to cross-cultural training.

Priority Action Area 3 – ICTs and Multimodal Delivery

Challenge: To increase and extend the education and training options of students in rural and remote areas using ICTs and a range of curriculum delivery methods.

Education Queensland's Response
Distance education
Action 16 – Affordable broadband Internet access

Education Queensland will introduce, from 2004, an annual subsidy to assist geographically isolated distance education families to access broadband Internet services. It will also continue to influence the Commonwealth to provide ongoing affordable broadband Internet access to distance education students in rural and remote Queensland.

Action 17 – Distance Education Enhancement Project (DEEP)

Education Queensland will continue to roll out the Distance Education Enhancement Project, a package of reforms for distance education students in the geographically isolated and medical categories. This project ensures equity of access for distance education students living in rural and remote areas of Queensland and includes four

interrelated components: digitisation of education materials; conversion of all Schools of Distance Education (SDEs) from HF radio to telephone teaching over 2003 and 2004; provision of an annual subsidy for computer-related hardware; and subsidising the costs of Internet downloads and data transfer in the home classroom. SDEs will work closely with students, parents and school communities to facilitate a successful transition to using digital materials and to tailor solutions to meet their individual needs and capacity.

Education Queensland will, in 2004, deliver recommendations about expanding some aspects of the DEEP initiative to other distance education enrolment categories.

Action 18 – Online delivery to distance education students' homes

Education Queensland will continue to trial live data-conferencing lessons to distance education students in their homes. This online delivery mode increases student engagement with learning, enables intensive tutoring, and fosters teacher–student interactivity and student collaboration.

Virtual schooling
Action 19 – Trial i-school to non-state schools

Education Queensland will trial the delivery of online curriculum to students in non-state school locations through the Virtual Schooling Service (VSS). Over the last three years, the VSS's i-school has delivered quality online education and increased the subject range available to over 750 Years 11 and 12 students attending small and/or rural and remote secondary state schools. Commencing in Term 3 2003, the trial of i-school in non-state school locations aims to:

- Provide students with access to diverse learning experiences in interactive online environments;
- Test the efficacy of the VSS delivery pedagogy in the non-state school sector;
- Explore cost-effective alternatives to the traditional distance education services for non-state school students; and
- Develop a work-shadowing model to skill teachers in Schools of Distance Education and capacity building.

Action 20 – Expand i-school subjects for Years 9–12

Education Queensland will increase the subject range in Years 9–12 offered through the Virtual Schooling Service. Eight subjects are currently being delivered through i-school – Economics, German, Information Processing and Technology, Junior Japanese, Senior Japanese, Maths C, Modern History and Physics. In 2004, i-school will introduce new subjects, including German (Year 12) and Legal Studies.

Action 21 – Online learning for students at risk

Education Queensland will enhance and coordinate online education and VET provision to provide flexible learning pathways to meet the needs of 15–17-year-olds who are most at risk of disengaging with school. The Virtual Schooling Service's i-support program will continue to provide online support and career education (including VET modules) for secondary students in rural and remote areas with limited access to guidance services.

Action 22 – Trial virtual schooling model in bypassed schools (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will trial a cluster-based delivery of Virtual Schooling Service (VSS) technology to provide extracurricular programs for secondary students in bypassed schools. The VSS model offers bypassed schools the opportunity to establish cohorts of students in particular year levels across rural and remote sites. By delivering extracurricular online programs in areas such as career education and Music, students at bypass schools will gain access to broader subject offerings and participate in collaborative e-learning environments, and teachers will explore new models of curriculum delivery.

Action 23 – Trial virtual secondary education college (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will investigate and prepare a business case to trial a virtual secondary education college across two districts. Two large high schools and four or more small P–10 schools will form a shared virtual campus of Years 8–10 students and teachers in order to coordinate shared accountabilities as well as curricular and extra-curricular program delivery and development. The virtual campus will be realised through the development of a multi-site intranet that can be accessed by students and staff from all participating schools.

Priority Action Area 4 – Personnel and Workforce Capability

Challenge: To recruit and retain a teaching and administrative workforce with the capability and flexibility to deliver high quality education services and opportunities for rural and remote students.

Education Queensland's Response
Teacher education
Action 24 – RATEP

Education Queensland will continue to provide the Remote Area Teaching Education Program (RATEP) in conjunction with James Cook University and other education and Indigenous agencies. RATEP delivers culturally appropriate teacher education courses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students based in remote communities. Graduates are equipped with the educational skills and cultural knowledge and experience to teach in remote Indigenous communities.

Action 25 – Bid O'Sullivan scholarships

Education Queensland will continue to offer a number of Bid O'Sullivan scholarships to assist Year 12 students from rural and remote areas within Queensland to undertake a Bachelor of Education. Following completion of their course, scholarship recipients are required to work in rural and remote schools for a minimum of four years.

Action 26 – Better preparation for pre-service teachers (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will explore a partnering relationship with the Priority Area Country Program (PCAP) Pre-service Forum to work with universities to better prepare graduates for dealing with the challenges of teaching and living in rural and remote areas by:

- Participating in a substantive research project into the promotion of rural and remote education and the issues facing teachers entering the workforce; OR
- Developing a web database for use by

pre-service teachers, universities and rural communities to post and access information about community sponsorship for practicums in rural and remote environments.

Recruitment and retention

Action 27 – First offers strategy for new teacher applicants

Education Queensland will continue to use the rural and remote first offers strategy to fill teaching vacancies in rural and remote schools on an as-needs basis. This strategy aims to ensure that rural and remote locations are staffed with quality teachers for the beginning of the school year.

Action 28 – Integrated teacher recruitment and incentive packages (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will prepare a business case to improve the recruitment and retention of teachers in rural and remote schools by developing integrated recruitment packages and incentives for teachers and their partners. This will involve:

• Reviewing the Remote Area Incentives Scheme (RAIS) to optimise the range of benefits available to teachers in rural and remote schools;

• Liaising with other government departments to formalise and promote whole-of-government recruitment packages to attract couples and families to work in rural and remote locations.

Action 29 – Rural and remote community induction programs (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will encourage districts to support teachers in their relocation to, and settling into life in, rural and remote locations by:

• Collaborating with local government and the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) to design 'meet and greet' workshops and social induction programs to engage teachers in local community life;

• Developing resources to support the delivery of these workshops and programs by local government agencies, local P&Cs and local community organisations.

Learning and development

Action 30 – Outreach programs for teacher professional development (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will investigate enhancing rural and remote teachers' access to relevant learning and development programs. Processes for ensuring Learning and Development Centres for Literacy, Gifted and Talented, and ICTs as well as Maths, Science and Technology Centres of Excellence engage with a minimum number of rural and remote schools each semester will be explored.

Action 31 – Rural and remote online learning communities (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will facilitate rural and remote districts to develop online learning communities for teachers in rural and remote areas. These communities will deliver online learning and development and also enable teachers to connect with other teachers within their district and across the state to share innovative classroom strategies and best practice models in rural and remote education.

Induction and support for principals

Action 32 – Induction programs for new principals

Education Queensland will conduct three induction programs for newly appointed principals in Term 3 2003. Each program will include a workshop focusing on the education leadership role of principals, and will be followed up with ongoing coaching and mentoring support. The design of, and participation in, each program will take account of the differences between principals' postings and the geographic implications for networking and further mentoring. Future induction programs will be informed by an evaluation of this trial.

Action 33 – Redevelop website for principals in small schools

Education Queensland will redevelop and update the website for principals in small schools.

Action 34 – Support for systemic planning

Education Queensland will provide support for systemic planning, administration and curriculum implementation in small schools by posting an overview of current expectations and support materials on Education Queensland's website.

Support for students at risk

Action 35 – Engage Youth Support Coordinators

Education Queensland will work in partnership with the Department of Families to employ up to 100 Youth Support Coordinators (YSCs) over the next three years. YSC positions have been allocated to the rural and remote ETRF trial areas of Emerald, Roma, Mt Isa, Fraser-Cooloola and Isis-Burnett. YSCs will provide one-to-one counselling for young people at risk of disengaging from learning.

Priority Action Area 5 – Environments and Resourcing

Challenge: To build community capacity and facilitate partnerships for creating innovative learning environments and efficient resourcing arrangements in rural and remote areas.

Education Queensland's Response

Travel and tuition

Action 36 – LAFHAS

Education Queensland will continue to provide a range of assistance under the Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme (LAFHAS) for students who are geographically isolated from the nearest required year level, including:

- Remote Area Tuition Allowance to compensate for tuition fees for eligible students who reside in the boarding houses of non-state schools;
- Remote Area Travel Allowance to eligible students to compensate travel costs from home to boarding locations;
- Remote Area Allowance to eligible students who reside in the four Queensland Agricultural Colleges and undertake courses equivalent to and in lieu of Years 11 and 12; and
- Remote Area Disability Supplement to compensate additional education costs incurred by students living away from home to attend special education placements.

Action 37 – Local transport solutions

Education Queensland will work with the Department of Transport to develop local transport solutions in rural and remote areas that enable young people to access a greater range of learning options.

Action 38 – Review RATA

Education Queensland will develop a proposal for revising the Remote Area Travel Allowance (RATA), which assists with the costs of transporting students to school. Taking account of road conditions and access to long distance transport services, the state has been divided into three geographic areas and benefit levels have been set according to the degree of isolation in those areas. The review will aim to ensure a more accurate alignment between benefit levels and the actual distances to be travelled, thus providing a more equitable distribution of allowance payments. RATA is part of the Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme.

Hostels

Action 39 – Improve away from home student support

Education Queensland will investigate avenues for improving support for students living away from home, including additional support for the 11 student hostels currently operating in rural communities. These hostels provide accommodation to geographically isolated primary and secondary students who are required to live away from home in order to attend local state and non-state schools.

Bypassing

Action 40 – Extend Bypassing Trial

Education Queensland will extend the Bypassing Trial for another 12 months until the end of 2004 in order to gather more data to inform a final evaluation. Bypassing allows students from 15 small isolated secondary schools to access financial assistance to study away from home. The trial aims to test whether bypassing has the potential to increase the proportion of rural and remote students who complete Year 12 or equivalent, and make the transition to work or further study. The trial also supports the bypassed schools, through the Outback Learning Network, to expand secondary curriculum delivery options in innovative ways to provide localised pathways for those students who remain at their local school.

Building community capacity through effective partnerships

Action 41 – Establish virtual campus (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will explore involving Executive Directors (Schools) in facilitating a process for a group of five or six small state schools to form 'satellite sites' of a larger virtual campus. The project will investigate how administrative and curriculum duties and accountabilities can be shared as well as models for global budgeting and reporting across sites. The project aims to reduce the administrative load on small school principals and to enhance cooperation and integration to improve student pathways.

Action 42 – Rural and Urban Schools Linking Scheme (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will explore the trialling of a Rural and Urban Schools Linking Scheme (RUSLS), whereby schools in rural/remote and urban areas are invited to participate in a 'buddy' system. This project will encourage buddy schools to share strategies, expertise and resources amongst students, teachers, administrators, P&Cs and wider communities. Possibilities for joint initiatives include online collaborative curriculum projects for students, mentoring programs for staff, and a range of extracurricular programs for reciprocal school camps.

Action 43 – Trial provincial Education Boards (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will investigate the trialling of provincial town Education Boards in two districts for one year. One Education Board will involve state schools only. The other Education Board will involve state schools and non-government schools. The trial aims to:

- Develop new models of collaboration and coordination across primary and secondary schools to make effective use of local expertise and resources
- Build effective partnerships and networks in order to tailor local solutions
- Increase community involvement to facilitate sustainability
- Enhance cooperation and integration to improve student pathways
- Improve sector-wide participation in shaping and delivering major education initiatives.

Any trial would build on and move beyond the processes currently being used to develop and deliver District Youth Achievement Plans.

Resourcing

Action 44 – Bulk procurement of TAFE courses

Education Queensland will investigate the bulk purchase and free provision of TAFE courses specifically developed for students aged 15–17 living in rural and remote areas and requiring support for literacy, numeracy and career preparation.

Action 45 – Financial modelling of options for resourcing (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will aim for greater equity and efficiency of resource allocation to best meet the needs of rural and remote schools by investigating the financial modelling of options for resourcing rural and remote schools. This project will analyse all current grants where the index of remoteness is applied and consult with stakeholders to identify other ways of distributing and using funds to better drive support for rural and remote schools.

Action 46 – Review definitions of 'rural' and 'remote' (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will review the definitions of 'rural' and 'remote' that currently underpin resource allocation and reporting and how these intersect with definitions used by the Commonwealth, Queensland Studies Authority and other agency models. This project will provide information on the performance and costs associated with small schools and schools in rural and remote areas to determine whether more finely tuned, targeted programs or alternative models exist that may provide more cost-effective outcomes.

Action 47 – Trial single point of contact model (Proposed innovation)

Education Queensland will explore trialling a 'one-stop shop' approach or single point of contact model for all school and family services that impact on education and training options and support in rural and remote areas. This project will build on existing work by AccessEd Queensland and Local Government Agents.

Table 1: Overview of activities in priority action areas

Key outcomes will be delivered through the following continuing (C) and planned new (N) activities as well as the proposed innovations (I) in the Priority Action Areas.

NB ** Indicates that the timing of the activity is dependent on the approval of a business case

Priority Action Area	Activity	Key contact	2003	2004	2005
Relevant and Engaged Learning	*Relevant curriculum*				
	New Basics trial (C)	Assessment & New Basics Branch	Ongoing	Report on trial	
	Literate Futures implementation (C)	Literacy, Curriculum Strategy Branch	Ongoing		
	Middle Phase of Learning Core Curriculum project (N)	Curriculum Strategy Branch	Project to start		
	Special needs				
	Support for students with disabilities (C)	Disability Services Support Unit	Ongoing		
	Therapy Services Coordination project (C)	Curriculum Strategy Branch		Report in Term 1 2004	
	Trial online support services for students with disabilities in remote areas (I)	Curriculum Strategy Branch	**Project to start		
	Distance education				
	Trial of preparatory year in Distance Education (N)	Early Childhood, Curriculum Strategy Branch		Term 1 2004	
	Remote Curriculum Enhancement Option (N)	Schools of Distance Education		Term 1 2004	
	Trial secondary school offerings through a regional School of Distance Education (N)	Charters Towers SDE		Term 1 2004 – Year 11 offering	Term 1 2005 – Years 11 & 12
	More options and flexibility for young people				
	School-based apprenticeships and traineeships (C)	Strategic Implementation Branch	Ongoing		
	Expansion of vocational education and training pathways for students at rural and remote Indigenous P–10 schools (N)	ETRF; A&TSI Ed Unit	ETRF rollout		
	Survey all P–10 and smaller P–12 schools to determine local pathways available to students in rural and remote areas (N)	ETRF, Strategic Implementation Branch	Term 3 2003		
	Workshops for principals of P–10 and smaller P–12 schools in rural and remote areas (N)	ETRF, Strategic Implementation Branch	Term 4 2003		

Priority Action Area	Activity	Key contact	2003	2004	2005
	Build cross-sectoral partnerships in rural and remote areas to find community solutions to enhance opportunities for young people (N)	ETRF, Strategic Implementation Branch	ETRF rollout		
Respecting Cultural Diversity	*Schools in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*				
	Partners for Success implementation (C)	Partners for Success Implementation Team	Ongoing		
ICTs and Multimodal Delivery	*Distance education*				
	Work with Commonwealth to provide affordable broadband Internet access to rural and remote Queensland (C)	ICTs and Learning Branch	2003 onwards		
	Rollout of Distance Education Enhancement project (C)	ICTs and Learning Branch		Term 1 2004 – Cairns, Charters Towers & Capricornia SDEs convert to telephone teaching	Term 1 2005 – Mt Isa & Longreach SDEs converted, Charleville & Brisbane upgraded
	Trial live data-conferencing lessons to Distance Education students in their homes (N)	Brisbane School of Distance Education	Ongoing		
	Virtual schooling				
	Trial delivery of i-school in non-state schools (N)	Virtual Schooling Service	Term 3 2003		
	Expansion of i-school subject range for Years 9–12 students (N)	Virtual Schooling Service		Term 1 2004	
	Enhance and coordinate online education and VET provision (N)	Virtual Schooling Service; ETRF		Term 1 2004	
	Trial Virtual Schooling Service model to provide extracurricular programs in bypass schools (I)	Virtual Schooling Service	Term 2 2003		
	Trial virtual secondary education college across two districts (I)	ICTs and Learning Branch		** Project to start	
Personnel and Workforce Capability	*Teacher education*				
	RATEP (C)	Partners for Success Implementation Team	Ongoing		

Priority Action Area	Activity	Key contact	2003	2004	2005
	Bid O'Sullivan scholarships (C)	Mt Isa DO	Yearly		
	Better preparation for pre-service teachers (I)	Office of Curriculum, Learning & Strategy		**Term 1 2004	
	Recruitment and retention				
	Rural and remote first offers strategy for new teacher applicants (C)	Employment Services Unit	Term 4 2003		
	Integrated recruitment packages and incentives for teachers and their families in rural and remote areas (I)	Strategic Human Resources		Term 3 2004	
	Local community induction programs for new teachers in rural and remote areas (I)	Office of Strategic Policy & Education Futures		Term 3 2004	
	Learning and development				
	Enhanced access to learning and development programs for rural and remote teachers (I)	Office of State Schooling		**Term 2 2004	
	Districts to develop online learning communities for rural and remote teachers (I)	Learning Place; ICTs and Learning Branch		**Term 2 2004	
	Induction and support for principals				
	Induction programs for new appointed principals (C)	Learning & Development Branch	Term 3 2003		
	Redevelop website for principals in small schools (C)	Office of State Schooling	Term 4 2003		
	Support for systemic planning, administration and curriculum implementation in small schools (N)	Office of State Schooling	Term 4 2003		
	Support for students at risk				
	Engage Youth Support Coordinators (N)	ETRF, Strategic Implementation Branch; Dept of Families	2003–2005		
Environments and Resourcing	*Travel and tuition*				
	LAFHAS (C)	Financial Services Branch	Term 4 2003		
	Work with Department of Transport to develop local transport solutions in rural and remote areas (C)	Office of State Schooling	Ongoing		
	Review RATA (N)	Financial Services Branch	Term 4 2003		
	Hostels				
	Investigate avenues for improving away from home student support (N)	Financial Services Branch		**Term 1 2004	
	Bypassing				
	Extend Bypassing Trial for another year (C)	Office of State Schooling		Trial ends Term 4 2004	

Priority Action Area	Activity	Key contact	2003	2004	2005
	Building community capacity through effective partnerships				
	Establish virtual campus of 5–6 small schools and global budget (I)	Office of State Schooling		** Project to start	
	Rural and Urban Schools Linking Scheme (I)	Principals		**Term 1 2004	
	Trial provincial Education Boards in two districts (I)	Executive Directors (Schools)		**Term 1 2004	
	Resourcing				
	Bulk procurement of TAFE courses (N)	ETRF, Strategic Implementation Branch		**Term 1 2004	
	Financial modelling of options for resourcing rural and remote schools (I)	Strategic Resource Management Branch		**Term 2 2004	
	Review definitions of 'rural' and 'remote' underpinning resource allocation and reporting (I)	Performance, Monitoring & Reporting Branch		Term 2 2004	
	Trial single point of contact model for school and family services in rural and remote areas (I)	Office of State Schooling		**Term 2 2004	

** Denotes – dependent on approval of business case.

Table 2: Overview of activities in learner contexts

Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that innovation is happening across the broad range of learner contexts.

Learner context	Activity	2003	2004	2005
Distance Education	Literate Futures implementation	Ongoing	Report on trial	
	Trial online support services for students with disabilities in remote areas		Project to start	
	Trial preparatory year in distance education		Term 1 2004	
	Remote Curriculum Enhancement enrolment category		Term 1 2004	
	Trial secondary school offerings through a regional School of Distance Education		Term 1 2004 – Year 11 offering	Term 1 2005 – Years 11 & 12 offerings
	Expand vocational education and training pathways	ETRF rollout		
	Build cross-sectoral partnerships	ETRF rollout		
	Affordable broadband Internet access			
	Distance Education Enhancement project		Term 1 2004 – Cairns, Charters Towers & Capricornia SDEs convert to telephone teaching	Term 1 2005 – Mt Isa & Longreach SDEs converted, Charleville & Brisbane upgraded
	Trial live data-conferencing lessons to students' homes	Ongoing		
	Online learning communities for rural and remote teachers		Term 2 2004	
Small primary schools	New Basics trial	Ongoing	Report on trial	
	Literate Futures implementation	Ongoing		
	Redevelop website for principals in small schools	Term 4 2003		
	Trial online support services for students with disabilities in remote areas		Project to start	
	Build cross-sectoral partnerships	ETRF rollout		
	Middle Phase of Learning Core Curriculum project			
	Redevelop website for principals in small schools	Term 4 2003		
	Bid O'Sullivan scholarships	Yearly		
	Induction programs for new principals	Term 3 2003		
	First offers strategy for new teacher applicants	Term 4 2003		
	Support for systemic planning	Term 4 2003		
	Better preparation for pre-service teachers		Term 1 2004	
	Integrated teacher recruitment and incentive packages		Term 3 2004	
	Local community induction programs		Term 3 2004	
	Enhanced access to teacher learning and development		Term 1 2004	
	Online learning communities for rural and remote teachers		Term 2 2004	
	Review RATA	Term 4 2003		

Learner context	Activity	2003	2004	2005
	Financial modelling of options for resourcing		Term 2 2004	
	Trial provincial Education Board		Term 1 2004	
	Trial single point of contact model		Term 2 2004	
	Review definitions of 'rural' and 'remote'		Term 2 2004	
Schools in provincial towns	New Basics trial	Ongoing	Report on trial	
	Literate Futures implementation	Ongoing		
	Support for students with disabilities	Ongoing		
	Build cross-sectoral partnerships	ETRF rollout		
	Middle Phase of Learning Core Curriculum project		Project to start	
	School-based apprenticeships and traineeships	Ongoing		
	Trial virtual secondary education college		Project to start	
	Engage Youth Support Coordinators	2003–2005		
	Integrated teacher recruitment and incentive packages		Term 3 2004	
	Local community induction programs		Term 3 2004	
	Online learning communities for rural and remote teachers		Term 2 2004	
	Improve away from home student support		Term 1 2004	
	Establish virtual campus		Project to start	
	Rural and Urban Schools Linking Scheme		Term 1 2004	
	Financial modelling of options for resourcing		Term 2 2004	
	Trial provincial Education Board		Term 1 2004	
	Trial single point of contact model		Term 2 2004	
	Bulk procurement of TAFE courses		Term 1 2004	
	Review definitions of 'rural' and 'remote'		Term 2 2004	
Schools in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	New Basics trial	Ongoing	Report on trial	
	Literate Futures implementation	Ongoing		
	Partners for Success implementation	Ongoing		
	Support for students with disabilities	Ongoing		
	Trial online support services for students with disabilities in remote areas		Project to start	
	School-based apprenticeships and traineeships	Ongoing		
	Expand vocational education and training pathways	ETRF rollout		
	Survey all P–10 and smaller P–12 schools	Term 3 2003		
	Workshops for P–10/12 principals	Term 4 2003		
	Build cross-sectoral partnerships	ETRF rollout		
	Middle Phase of Learning Core Curriculum project		Project to start	
	Trial secondary school offerings through a regional School of Distance Education		Term 1 2004 – Year 11 offering	Term 1 2005 – Years 11 & 12 offerings

Learner context	Activity	2003	2004	2005
	Expand i-school subjects for Years 9–12		Term 1 2004	
	Enhance online education and VET provision		Term 1 2004	
	RATEP	Ongoing		
	First offers strategy for new teacher applicants	Term 4 2003		
	Engage Youth Support Coordinators	2003– 2005		
	Support for systemic planning	Term 4 2003		
	Better preparation for pre-service teachers		Term 1 2004	
	Integrated teacher recruitment and incentive packages		Term 3 2004	
	Local community induction programs		Term 3 2004	
	Enhanced access to teacher learning and development		Term 1 2004	
	Online learning communities for rural and remote teachers		Term 2 2004	
	Extend Bypassing Trial		Trial ends Term 4 2004	
	Rural and Urban Schools Linking Scheme		Term 1 2004	
	Financial modelling of options for resourcing		Term 2 2004	
	Trial single point of contact model		Term 2 2004	
	Bulk procurement of TAFE courses		Term 1 2004	
	Review definitions of 'rural' and 'remote'		Term 2 2004	
P–10/12 schools	New Basics trial	Ongoing	Report on trial	
	Literate Futures implementation	Ongoing		
	Support for students with disabilities	Ongoing		
	Trial online support services for students with disabilities in remote areas		Project to start	
	School-based apprenticeships and traineeships	Ongoing		
	Expand vocational education and training pathways	ETRF rollout		
	Survey all P–10 and smaller P–12 schools	Term 3 2003		
	Workshops for P–10/12 principals	Term 4 2003		
	Build cross-sectoral partnerships	ETRF rollout		
	Middle Phase of Learning Core Curriculum project		Project to start	
	Trial secondary school offerings through a regional School of Distance Education		Term 1 2004 – Year 11 offering	Term 1 2005 – Years 11 & 12 offerings
	Expand i-school subjects for Years 9–12		Term 1 2004	
	Enhance online education and VET provision		Term 1 2004	
	Trial VSS model in bypass schools	Term 2 2003		
	Trial virtual secondary education college		Project to start	
	First offers strategy for new teacher applicants	Term 4 2003		
	Engage Youth Support Coordinators	2003–2005		
	Support for systemic planning	Term 4 2003		
	Better preparation for pre-service teachers		Term 1 2004	
	Integrated teacher recruitment and incentive packages		Term 3 2004	

Learner context	Activity	2003	2004	2005
	Local community induction programs		Term 3 2004	
	Enhanced access to teacher learning and development		Term 1 2004	
	Online learning communities for rural and remote teachers		Term 4 2004	
	LAFHAS	Term 4 2003		
	Local transport solutions	Ongoing		
	Improve away from home student support		Term 1 2004	
	Extend Bypassing Trial		Trial ends Term 4 2004	
	Review RATA		2004	
	Establish virtual campus		Project to start	
	Rural and Urban Schools Linking Scheme		Term 1 2004	
	Financial modelling of options for resourcing		Term 2 2004	
	Trial provincial Education Board		Term 1 2004	
	Trial single point of contact model		Term 2 2004	
	Bulk procurement of TAFE courses		Term 1 2004	
	Review definitions of 'rural' and 'remote'		Term 2 2004	