

# **RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RREAC)**

## **ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT**

**2012**



RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL:  
ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2012

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## INTRODUCTION

RREAC consists of representatives from various community groups who are consumers of, or have a strong vested interest in, rural and remote education in Western Australia. Members of the Council are appointed by the Minister for Education. A list of members for this reporting period is provided at section 1.10.

The Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (RREAC), initially established in 1997, was re-constituted by the Minister for Education in early 2010 with a new Chairperson and a new Deputy Chairperson. The RREAC membership is drawn from expert stakeholders/representatives from various consumer/community and funder/provider groups with a strong interest in rural and remote education in Western Australia. Members use their experience, skills, attributes or qualifications to perform their advisory function. The funders/providers of educational services in Western Australia are ex-officio members of RREAC.

RREAC is chaired by, the Hon Brian Ellis MLC Member for the Agricultural Region with the deputy chair, the Hon Mia Davies MLC Member for the Agricultural Region.

During this reporting period the Chair and Deputy Chair met with the Minister for Education and Training on a regular basis.

In 2010 RREAC was given new terms of reference and directions by the Minister for Education that focus the Council's attention on three Government priorities. The Terms of Reference provide the Minister with evidence-based and solutions-focused, strategic advice on education and training issues and developments in rural and remote areas of the State. In addition, the Minister has referred the following specific directions to the Council:

- ▮ Provide advice on how the Government should be addressing the emerging need to have more qualified staff available for rural and remote education settings, such as child care and early education, in order for the State to meet COAG's new national requirements and standards.
- ▮ Provide advice about the future uses of technology in the delivery of education in rural and remote education settings.
- ▮ Provide advice about access to and provision of higher education in rural and remote settings, following the *Review of Regional Loading*.

The first meeting of the re-constituted RREAC was held in August 2010. Overall, RREAC is scheduled to meet six times per year. The April 2011 meeting was conducted in Geraldton to coincide with the opening of the Meekatharra School of the Air that was attended by RREAC members.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

### RREAC's Terms of Reference for this reporting period were:

- To provide the Minister for Education with evidence-based, and solution-focused strategic advice on education and training issues and developments in rural and remote areas of the State.
- To provide specific strategic advice on the education services that give senior secondary students in rural and remote areas equitable opportunities for compulsory participation in education and training.
- To advise about rural and remote community and consumer interests in education and training.
- To ensure strategic advice is provided from a cross-sectoral perspective across the schools, training and higher education sectors and encompasses both the public and private provision.

### Minister's Directions

1. Provide advice on how the Government should be addressing the emerging need to have more qualified staff available for rural and remote education settings, such as child care and early education, in order for the State to meet COAG's new national requirements and standards. (Initiatives such as *Welcome to the Bush*).
2. Provide advice about the future uses of technology in the delivery of education in rural and remote education settings.
3. Following the *Review of Regional Loading*, provide advice about access to and provision of higher education in rural and remote settings.

## OUTCOMES

During 2012 RREAC met on the following occasions:

Friday 16 March 2012 (attended by Hon Elizabeth Constable MLA, Minister for Education)

Wednesday 9 May – Friday 11 May 2012 (regional Meeting – Broome)

Friday 27 July 2012 (attended by the Hon Peter Collier, Minister for Education MLC; Toursim; Indigenous Affairs)

Friday 14 September – Merredin – Opening of Merredin College / Merredin Residential College (met with the Hon Peter Collier, Minister for Education; Toursim; Indigenous Affairs)

Friday 26 October 2012

Friday 30 November 2012

Each metropolitan meeting was for the entire day, usually commencing at 8.00 am and concluding at 3.00pm or when business is completed.

## Outcomes Cont:

The Hon Peter Collier MLC, Minister for Education; Energy; Indigenous Affairs endorsed the five (5) recommendations put forward by RREAC on 19 September 2012: These included:

That the Minister for Education notes this information along with the five recommendations within the future uses of technology in the delivery of education in rural and remote education settings, namely:

1. That the state government be urged to consolidate government agencies to work together on a Digital Plan to maximise the benefits of technology to all regional and remote communities.
2. The Minister advocates for the effective delivery of the NBN rollout for education services in Western Australia. Current planning and funding does not meet the unique needs of regional and remote Western Australia.
3. That all education sectors in our regional and remote areas have the capacity to ensure that teachers and all school staff have the support and training to utilise technology effectively to maximise student outcomes and to foster professional growth.
4. The Minister supports RREAC continuing to pursue the issue of good practice related to technology within the education sector to provide ongoing feedback to inform the Minister of emerging issues and developments.
5. When the Minister notes technological issues or developments that could impact on education it is referred back to RREAC for further action.

RREAC is currently acting on these recommendations.

## MEETING PRESENTERS / GUESTS

The following people presented information at RREAC meetings during this reporting period.

Name	Position/Organisation	Topic	Meeting
Hon Elizabeth Constable, Minister for Education	Minister for Education	Various education issues including Year Seven and transition to high school; National education Agenda – issues paper; Directions – RREAC’s future role.	16/02/2012
Ms Valerie Gould	Executive Director, Association of Independent Schools	Overview of Gonski Report – Review of Funding for Schools	16/02/2012
Mr Greg Robson	Regional Executive Director – Kimberley Region	Overview – Education in the Kimberley Region	09/05/2012
Mr John Hill	Aboriginal Independent Community Schools Advisor for Kimberley & some Pilbara Areas	Issues related to Aboriginal education – current situation; challenges; issues; support services; staffing.	09/05/2012
Ms Edie Wright	Manager, Aboriginal education – Kimberley Regional Office	Issues re remote community schools; residential colleges; pastoral care; education programs; capacity building.	09/05/2012
Ms Michelle Pucci	Wunan Community	Joodoogeb-be-gerring Werlemen Program – Giving Severely Disadvantaged Young Aboriginal Women the Knowledge, Confidence, Imagination and Skills to Develop Better Lives for Themselves.	09/05/2012
Ms Maree Gaffney	Education and Training Coordinator for Kimberley Land Council	Kimberley Reading Recovery Program.	09/05/2012
Ms Jocelyn McCarthy Ms Bree Wagner Mr Dan Walker	Fitzroy Valley District High School	Discussion re ESL students; Use of Creole/Code Switching; Teacher Development; Community Engagement; and, Programs at Fitzroy Valley District High School.	10/05/2012
Mr Saeed Amin	Principal: Broome Senior High School	Attendance; Partnerships/engagement with Aboriginal Communities; Challenges; Residential College; Engagement with Primary Schools; Engagement with Community; Cross Sectorial engagement; Trade Training Centre; SSEP – Integrated Vocational Program; School Student Profile; Anticipated Growth of Broome; Half Cohort; Year 7’s; Access to SIDE; Futures for graduating students.	11/05/2012

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Organisation</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
Ms Maree Barton	Deputy Principal, St Mary's College	Student Cohort; Issues; Staffing; Technology; Language Groups; Attendance; Year 7's; Housing for Staff; Programs (Arts); Sharing Resources; SIDE	12/05/2012
Ms Karen Dickensen	CEO Kimberley Institute	Issues; Staffing; Programs; Maritime Simulator; Funding; Remote Service Model; Aquaculture Centre.	12/05/2012
Prof Lynne Henderson	University of Notre Dame, Broome Campus	Background to Notre Dame (Broome); Programs; Research Institute; Issues and Challenges.	12/05/2012
Mr Ken Donohoe Mr Bruce Campbell-Fraser	CEO, Shire of Broome Shire President	Shire of Broome: Statistical Information; Strategic and Corporate Plan 2011-2016; Issue – Affordable accommodation; impact of fly-in-fly-out; transience; building costs; unemployment; delivery of services to remote communities.	12/05/2012
Hon Peter Collier MLC Minister for Education; Energy; Indigenous Affairs	Minister for Education; Tourism; Indigenous Affairs	The Minister provided an overview of his background and plans for the future of Education in WA. Discussion noted: subject choice; technology; year 7 transition; minimum certification when leaving school; school configurations – annex; closure etc. Issues raised by councillors included: Funding (Gonski); Information Technology and Muresk.	27/07/2012
Mr Peter Titmanis	Executive Director, Innovation, Performance and Research, Department of Education	Outline of Prime Minister's response to the Gonski Report; National Plan for School Improvement; broad reform areas; Collaboration as a vital ingredient to success; the next step.	26/10/2012
Hon Brian Ellis, MLC	Chair RREAC; Member for Agriculture	Presentation to the 28 <sup>th</sup> National SPERA Conference.	26/10/2012
Ms Brenda Williamson	CWA	Report by Stakeholder on current status CWA	26/10/2012
Ms Emma Foulkes-Taylor	ICPA	Report by Stakeholder on current status ICPA WA	26/10/2012
Ms Patricia Leake	WA Farmers' Federation	Report by Stakeholder on current status WA Farmers' Federation	26/10/2012
Prof Sue Trinidad	Vice Chancellor's WA Universities	Report by Stakeholder on current status WA Universities	26/10/2012



<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Organisation</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
Ms Deborah Rice	Regional Development and Lands	Report by Stakeholder on current status RDL	26/10/2012
Mr Gary Robinson	Association of Independent Schools	Report by Stakeholder on current status AISWA	26/10/2012
Ms Carol Guerts	Catholic Education Office, Kimberley Region	Report by Stakeholder on current status CEO	26/10/2012
Ms Kay Gerard	Food, Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council (WA) Inc.	Report by Stakeholder on current status FFTITC WA	26/10/2012
Mr Chris Mitchell	West Australian Local Government Association	Report by Stakeholder on current status WALGA	26/10/2012
Prof Sue Trinidad Mr Don Boyd Emmy Terry	TERRR Network re (OLT Grant)	Pre-Service Teacher Training Package	27/11/2012
Ms Carol Garlet Ms Lorna Pederson	Chsirperson WA Aboriginal Education and Training Council Administration Assistant WAAETC Education and Training Council	Patent and Community Engagement Program	27/11/2012
Judy Skene	Associate Director, Student Support Service Senior Project Officer, School of Indigenous Studies	ASPIRE UWA Program	27/11/2012
Ms Louise Pollard Mr Ray Garrett Ms Sue Puognault	Senior Project Officer, School of Medicine UWA Student Support Coordinator, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and health Services, UWA		
Ms Anne Gisborne	President, WASSTU	Report by Stakeholder on current status/issues of WASSTU	27/11/2012
Ms Kylie Cato	President, WA Council of State School Organisations	Report by Stakeholder on current status/issues of WACSSO	27/11/2012
Ms Pamela Wheeler	Program Manager – VTEC, Esperance Campus	Report by Stakeholder on the current status/issues of the Department of Training & Workforce Development	27/11/2012
Ms Kay Gerard	Food, Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council (WA) Inc.	Report by Stakeholder on the current status FFTITC WA	27/11/2012
Ms Emma Foulkes-Taylor	ICPA	Report by Stakeholder on the current status/issues of ICPA WA	27/11/2012
Mr David Lloyd	Department of Education Servicers	Report by Stakeholder on the current status/issues of DES	27/11/2012

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Organisation</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
Prof Sue Trinidad	Vice Chancellor's WA Universities	Report by Stakeholder on the current status issues of WA Universities	27/11/2012
Ms Lesley Street	Department of Education	Report by Stakeholder on the current status/issues of the Department of Education	27/11/2012
Mr Gary Robinson	Association of Independent Schools	Report by Stakeholder on current status/issues of AISWA	27/11/2012
Ms Wendy Newman	CEO Wheatbelt Development Commission	Report by Stakeholder on current status/issues of the Regional Development Council	27/11/2012

During 2012 RREAC finalised key issues and made recommendations relating to the future uses of technology in the delivery of education in rural and remote settings.

Following feedback from RREAC members and input from the Department of Education Services this report was finalised. In line with its terms of reference and the Minister's directions, RREAC presented the final report on the future uses of technology in the delivery of education in rural and remote settings.

The Chair, Deputy Chair and Councillors of RREAC affirmed that, as part of the Council's core business, the opportunity to experience first-hand education in a regional context is paramount. Council confirmed that the Kimberley region offered more opportunities in terms of regional development, education provided by a range of systems and sectors and, the opportunity to experience, in real time, education training in the remote context. A comprehensive program was provided for the Council and meetings were held with a range of relevant stake holders involved in education and training

The purpose of meeting with these selected stakeholders was to:

- Verify the work RREAC completed on early childhood education and care, the delivery and access to higher education and the future uses of technology in the delivery of education;
- Ensure that council members were attuned to the many issues and challenges facing regional and remote students, staff, families, communities, and the strategies employed to overcome disadvantage and maximise outcomes; and to
- Expose the council members first hand to the educational environment in the Kimberley and enable them to receive reports directly from those engaged in the delivery of education on the many issues and challenges facing regional and remote students, staff, families, communities and the strategies employed to overcome disadvantage and maximise outcomes.

RREAC is currently finalising its report on the regional meeting in the Kimberleys and will forward it to the Minister for his consideration.

## **PROVISION OF ADVICE TO THE MINISTER**

Advice / Correspondence to the Minister during this period included:

1. Response to the appointment of the Hon Peter Collier MLC as Minister for Education the Chair and Executive Officer met with the Minister to provide him with background information; the restructuring of RREAC in mid-2010 coupled with the new terms of reference and Minister's directions and the work undertaken by RREAC since October 2010. In addition the Chair, the Hon Brian Ellis MLC outlined the importance of RREAC's Kimberley Regional meeting that provided council with a first-hand experience of education access and delivery in a remote location and to note the significant issues and challenges facing educators in the region.
2. Report - The Future Uses of Technology in Education in Rural and Remote Western Australia was finalised and forwarded to the Minister in September 2012. Strategic priorities and five key recommendations were included. The Minister endorsed all 5 recommendations with further action undertaken in response. Refer to Appendix 1.
3. Report – RREAC Kimberley Region Meeting in regional and remote locations
4. The Chair, the Hon Brian Ellis and Executive Officer met with the Minister on 18 October 2012 to:
  - Identify further directions and issues to be investigated by Council during 2012/2013;
  - Clarify the issue of regional meetings / field trips; and
  - Gain endorsement from the Minister for RREAC to self-initiate reports.

## **FINANCIAL PROVISION**

The expenses of RREAC are provided from within the annual budget of Department of Education Services (DES).

RREAC has a separate line item within DES's accounts.

For the financial year 2011/2012 RREAC was allocated a budget of \$131 000 including salary costs.

## **MEMBER'S RENUMERATION**

No RREAC members receive a salary or sitting fee

Travel and accommodation allowances are provided to non-public sector members who live beyond the metropolitan area.

Travel is by air where possible (cheapest fare). A rebate is provided for those Council members who need to drive to meetings from country locations based on the size of the motor of the vehicle.

## **EXECUTIVE STAFF**

As part of the 2010 restructure the Council was provided with two part time officers – administrative support and principal executive officer.

RREAC's staff provide support to DES on a needs basis.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

RREAC reports under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997, through the Department of Education Services' Annual Report and Financial Statement.

## TOTALS 2012

		Mar-12	May-12	27-Jul-12	14-Sep-12	26-Oct-12	30-Nov-12	TOTALS
AIRFARE Intrastate	1107	1459.35	11759.69	1664.55	430.58	550.94	1359.2	<b>17224.31</b>
AIRFARE Interstate							508	<b>508</b>
ACCOMMODATION	1102	806.41	4678.45	783.35	155.5	466.5	883.85	<b>7774.06</b>
MEALS	1102	0	2372.28	0	0	0	64.7	<b>2436.98</b>
CATERING - non staff	1521	103.2	19.01	0	0	0	0	<b>122.21</b>
TAXI FARE	1101	0	52.8	45	0	44	616.21	<b>758.01</b>
CAR HIRE non staff	1358	180.45	637.26	886.67	0	398.47	521.75	<b>2624.6</b>
VEHICLE mileage non staff	1206	947.78	596.35	669.68	136.5	513.7	1144	<b>4008.01</b>
FARES OTHER	1110	0	0	33	0	0	0	<b>33.00</b>
		<b>3497.19</b>	<b>20115.84</b>	<b>4082.25</b>	<b>722.58</b>	<b>1973.61</b>	<b>5097.71</b>	<b>35489.18</b>
				<b>***Meeting Costs e.g. venue, hire &amp; meals</b>				<b>3065.40</b>
				<b>E Terry &amp; S Bates salaries for 12 months 52,998.72 + 28457</b>				<b>\$82,391.80</b>
							<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120,946.38</b>

\*\* Broome Region May 2012 meeting all costs met by DES direct.

\*\*\* Merredin College Opening 14 Sept 12 all costs paid by DES direct.

<u>***Meetings Trinity College</u>		
Mar-12		911.1
May - already in budget		
27-Jul-12		689.6
Sept - already in budget		
Oct-12		627.2
Nov-12		837.5
		<b>3065.4</b>

## OUTLOOK FOR 2013

The Hon Peter Collier MLC, Minister for Education; Tourism; Indigenous Affairs in discussions with the Chair, Hon Brian Ellis and the Executive Officer RREAC noted:

1. That the RREAC was an advisory Council and as such the onus was on Council to bring to the Minister's attention any issues and challenges that may need addressing. He encouraged short self-initiated reports on rural, regional and remote matters. The Minister also stated that the emphasis of reports should be on the teaching components (e.g. attraction and retention) and this would be particularly significant for regional and remote areas over the next five years.
2. Noted that two positions remained vacant on Council. Minister Collier noted the absence of a WAAETC representative and requested that RREAC follow through with this as it is critical for regional and remote areas to have an active representative from this Council. Similarly Minister Collier requested that RREAC follow through with the Chamber of Minerals and Energy to fill this vacancy. Otherwise the Minister indicated that RREAC comprised a good coverage of stakeholders. He also sought advice on the number of meetings and the executive support RREAC had to conduct its business.
3. Encouraged regional visits as Brian noted that in 2013 he would like Council to undertake two regional visits. Brian also indicated that the Broome Regional meeting revitalised Council and provided the opportunity for RREAC to experience first-hand, education in the Kimberley Region and the issues and challenges facing teachers, schools and other education institutions, parents and the wider communities. Minister Collier encouraged RREAC to undertake such meetings within budget parameters.

The Minister was happy with the work RREAC had undertaken since its reformation and once again stated that he did not want to confine RREAC in its work by identifying priorities and directions. Overall, the Minister encouraged all RREAC Council members to "think outside of the box" – all ideas would be welcome.

## RREAC PRIORITIES 2013

Following discussion at the RREAC meeting held on 30 November 2012 RREAC Council determined that it would focus on two priorities:

1. Attraction and Retention of Quality Teachers
2. VET in Schools.

While these two areas are very broad RREAC, as a starting point, will focus on issues such as:

### Attraction and Retention of Quality Teachers and Staff

- Focus on student outcomes and the attraction and retention of quality teachers (RREAC will refer back to the TWOMEY Report as a starting point)
- Support for graduate teachers in rural and remote areas
- Enabling pre-service teachers to experience life and work in rural and remote locations
- Remote Aboriginal students/staff/community partnerships - ability of teachers / staff to help build partnerships between community / school and students (in respect to

this RREAC will work closely with the Western Australian Aboriginal Training and Education Council).

- Attracting and retaining quality school leaders
- Building leadership / capacity in schools to bridge the link between school and community
- Funding cuts implications for rural and remote schools and students, (for example: staffing, capacity building, support for graduates, enabling pre-service experiences etc.)

## VET in Schools

VET in schools represents a suite of programs that enable students to undertake accredited training whilst enrolled at school. In accordance with the nationally-agreed definition, VET in schools programs: are undertaken by school students as part of their senior secondary studies; and contribute to a nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET) qualification within the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)

Vocational education and training in schools (VETiS) was launched in 1997, with the primary objectives of increasing school student retention and improving the transition between senior secondary education and post-school employment and training options.

In recent years, VETiS has been seen as a strategy of addressing industry skill shortages. As such, VETiS now has the important focus of leading to an occupational outcome.

It is believed that regional students are disadvantaged in both access to and quality of VET in School programs. The main issues are:

- Thin markets (small numbers of students who want to access a particular qualification), therefore financially not viable for the RTO and or the school
- RTOs that are unable to offer a range of programs due to a lack of qualified staff
- VET in School programs that don't give students a realistic workplace experience, and therefore don't give the students skills that reflect current workplace practices
- Accommodation and transport
- A suite of qualifications that are on offer that may not lead to employment outcomes (what is attractive to students versus what will give them an employment outcome)
- The place and role of VET: To consider VET's role in the tertiary education sector, world of work and community

### Action:

Research into VET in Schools to highlight the issues impacting on regional students, and then **investigating models and identifying solutions** that alleviate barriers (what successful models in other states; looking at good practice; what skills are required in the bush?).



## NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH

### National Research Priorities

The Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) has agreed to a new set of national research priorities, which will govern research activity until 2013.

The national research priorities for tertiary education and training 2011-2013 were endorsed in June 2010, consistent with the advice of the NCVER Board following an extensive consultation period with stakeholders.

The context for the priorities, feedback from the consultations and the advice in relation to the priorities can be found in the full report [here](#).

The priorities will guide NCVER's commissioned research under the National VET Research Program as well inform NCVER's own research activities and developments in the Australian VET statistical collections conducted on behalf of the Australian, state and territory governments. The research priorities may also frame activities across the broader tertiary education and training community.

The five research priority subject areas endorsed are:

- Skills and productivity: To investigate how skills contribute to economic growth
- Structures in the tertiary education and training system: To examine the impact of policy, funding and market frameworks on the provision of education and training
- The contribution of education and training to social inclusion: To explore the reduction of disadvantage through education and training
- Learning and teaching: To understand how, why, where and when people learn

The place and role of VET: To consider VET's role in the tertiary education sector, world of work and community

**Website:** <http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/priorities.html>

## MEMBERS / STAKEHOLDERS

Hon	Brian Ellis	Member for the Agricultural Region	Chairperson
Hon	Mia Davies	Member for the Agricultural Region	Deputy Chairperson
TITLE	NAME	OCCUPATION	NOMINATED BY
Ms	Anne Gisborne	President, SSTUWA	State School Teachers' Union of WA Inc (SSTUWA)
Mrs	Brenda Williamson	President, Yuna CWA (teacher)	Country Women's Association of WA Inc
Mrs	Deborah Rice	Director, Community Resource Network	Department of Regional Development and Lands
Mrs	Emma Foulkes-Taylor	Representative ICPA (WA)	Isolated Children's Parents' Association of WA State Council
Ms	Patricia Leake	Representative WA Farmers Federation	The WA Farmers Federation Education Portfolio Holder
Ms	Kay Gerard	Chief Executive Officer	Food, Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council (WA) Inc
Mrs	Anne-Marie Schelfhout	Representative	Parents and Friends' Federation of WA Inc
Mrs	Kylie Catto	President, WACSSO	WA Council of State School Organisations
New Nomination in process		Awaiting completion nomination of new candidate	WA Aboriginal Education and Training Council
Ms	Wendy Newman	CEO Wheatbelt Development Commission	Regional Development Council
		Awaiting receipt of nomination of new candidate	The Chamber of Minerals & Energy WA
Mr	Mr Christopher Mitchell	Executive Officer (Regional Development Australia-Kimberley)	Western Australian Local Government Association

### Funder/Providers

TITLE	NAME	OCCUPATION	NOMINATED BY
Ms	Carol Geurts	Regional Officer and Principal School Advisor	Catholic Education Office of WA
Mr	Richard Strickland	Chief Executive Officer	Department of Education Services
Mr	Gary Robinson	Representative AISWA	Association of Independent Schools of WA
Mr	Lindsay Hale	A/Executive Director Statewide Planning and Delivery	Department of Education
Prof	Sue Trinidad,	Dean of Teaching & Learning,	Faculty of Humanities – Curtin University & WA Universities
Ms	Pamela Wheeler	Program Manager – VTEC, Esperance Campus	Department of Training & Workforce Development

# APPENDIX 1

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Future Uses of Technology in the Delivery of Education in Rural and Remote Settings

RREAC to provide advice about the future uses of technology in the delivery of education in rural and remote education settings.

#### Background

The report, future uses of technology in the delivery of education in regional and remote locations identifies and provides a summary of the ICT situation for the WA public, independent and Catholic systems. The paper comments that ICT can improve the quality of teachers, attraction and retention of students and teachers, student achievement and community development. The NBN will assist with this purpose but users must have the expertise and knowledge to effectively utilise ICT for both student learning and personal professional growth and development.

Over the last six months RREAC has devoted time to researching and gauging opinions on the issues, challenges and developments associated with ICT and the NBN rollout. In doing this RREAC has: drawn on member organisations to provide information; consulted other agency associated with NBN and ICT.

#### Current Situation

ICT is a *'powerful opportunity'* but trainers must be qualified, aspirations encouraged in learners, governance and partnerships required (including with health etc. for sharing technology), and blended delivery paramount, *'technology is not stand alone'*.

The paper allies with aspects of Gonski and recommendations from the National Rural Education Summit (Adelaide 2011) in that they present aspirations for a better educated Australia, equity for all Australian students, funding and use of best methods of enabling equitable education, this including using information technology, and, in the case of delivery with ICT, funding for equitable access (i.e. everybody with same band width, quality of hard and soft ware, up-skilled teachers etc.). Also, when delivering teaching and learning through online methods, to ensure there is also a face to face component i.e. *'blended' delivery*.

In Western Australia the three education systems/sectors operating include the Department of Education (DoE), the Catholic Education Office (CEO), and the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia Incorporated (AISWA). All operate their own systems. The paper provides brief case studies outlining the status of ICT in each of the three sectors.

Opportunities and challenges that face not only the education sector but the wider community as a whole are highlighted. However, these challenges are not insurmountable – planning, policy development and a strategic co-ordinated approach is a way forward for regional and remote communities.

In conclusion the paper provides an overview of the implications of the NBN for education, specifically as it may impact on Western Australia.

RREAC endorses the Minister's view that technology is not a stand-alone solution for access to and the delivery of education to regional and remote Western Australia.

### **Action Required**

That the Minister for Education notes this information along with the five recommendations within the future uses of technology in the delivery of education in rural and remote education settings, namely:

1. That the state government be urged to consolidate government agencies to work together on a Digital Plan to maximise the benefits of technology to all regional and remote communities.
2. The Minister advocates for the effective delivery of the NBN rollout for education services in Western Australia. Current planning and funding does not meet the unique needs of regional and remote Western Australia.
3. That all education sectors in our regional and remote areas have the capacity to ensure that teachers and all school staff have the support and training to utilise technology effectively to maximise student outcomes and to foster professional growth.
4. The Minister supports RREAC continuing to pursue the issue of good practice related to technology within the education sector to provide ongoing feedback to inform the Minister of emerging issues and developments.
5. When the Minister notes technological issues or developments that could impact on education it is referred back to RREAC for further action.

Hon Brian Ellis MLC  
Chair RREAC  
Member for Agricultural Region

Hon Mia Davies MLC  
Deputy Chair RREAC  
Member for Agricultural Region