



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Regional Education Strategy

**A vision for strengthening
public education in the regions**



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which our students live and are educated throughout Western Australia.

We acknowledge and understand that Elders, parents, families and communities are the first educators of their children and we recognise and value the cultures and strengths that Aboriginal children bring to the classroom.

Aboriginal people have a long tradition of teaching and learning through sharing their connections with Country, community, language and culture, and through their oral histories, stories and lived experiences that are passed from generation to generation.

We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom.

This statement uses the term 'Aboriginal' to respectfully mean Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Indigenous.

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Department of Education
151 Royal Street
East Perth WA 6004
9264 4111
education.wa.edu.au

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Minister's message

The Cook Government is committed to delivering a high quality education to every young Western Australian, no matter where they live or what their abilities.

The government is currently delivering record levels of reform and investment into public education – including the landmark \$1.6 billion Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – which is working to ensure all our students can reach their potential.

This strategy for regional education is focused on the 6 non-metropolitan education regions – Goldfields, Kimberley, Midwest, Pilbara, South West and Wheatbelt.

Our state's geography and demographics present unique opportunities and challenges for how we deliver quality education and support services to students in public schools. From our consultation we heard loud and clear that our strategy should not take a one-size-fits-all approach but must consider each region individually.

This overarching strategy has been shaped to accommodate the contextual differences across our vast state and empowers our staff in Education Regional Offices to work with schools in identifying key focus areas of future work to meet local circumstances.

We want to build on the already great work happening in our regional schools, and across the system, in one coordinated approach, led by the communities in the regions.



Hon Sabine Winton MLA
Minister for Education



Director General's message

All our students deserve a good education that sets them up for a successful future, regardless of their postcode.

Our commitment is that every young person leaves school well-equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to make their way in the world. That success depends on them first having access to quality education programs, taught by quality teachers.

Regional schools in Western Australia are already doing remarkable work – led by dedicated staff and supported by their communities to deliver meaningful outcomes for their students. But we also know they face persistent challenges, particularly in attracting and retaining skilled and experienced leaders, teachers, and allied professionals. These schools need more support.

To address these unique challenges, we must first recognise the unique characteristics of regional schools and their communities – and shape solutions that succeed because of their local context, not despite it. We will continue to build the capability of our people in schools and regional services to strengthen educational options and partnerships that expand student opportunities and connect learning to life beyond school.

This strategy sets out our aspirations for public schools in our regions and the approach we will take, working with regional communities, to realise those aspirations for our students and staff alike.



Jay Peckitt
Director General



Delivering public education in the regions

Structuring education delivery in Western Australia necessitates acknowledging the contextual differences in our regions.

From the semi-arid beauty of the Kimberley to the temperate forests of the South West, our 6 non-metropolitan education regional offices have a deep understanding of local circumstances and are best placed to identify and implement effective, local strategies.

In outlining our aspirations for regional education, it's important to understand the context and the different environments across regional Western Australia and what that means for how public education is delivered in these communities.

Of our more than 800 public schools across Western Australia, just over 300 are in our 6 non-metropolitan regions. About 20% of our total student population and nearly half of our Aboriginal students attend these schools.

Enrolment in these schools can range from less than 10 students across multiple year levels in a small primary school through to over 1,200 in a secondary school.

Large regional centres have a student population that supports a number of schools providing primary education from Kindergarten to Year 6 and secondary education from Years 7 to 12.

Large country towns have district high schools catering for students from Kindergarten to Year 10. To enable secondary students to access a broad range of curriculum options, where the student enrolment numbers are low or where there is no specialist subject teacher, the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) can deliver specialist subjects online to those students in their schools.

Other options for regional students include attending a senior high school, one of the 5 Western Australian Colleges of Agriculture, and boarding at a residential college to attend a regional school.

Schools Of The Air enable distance education for students living in isolated communities. These schools deliver curriculum as a combination of online learning and home tutors.

Networks of regional schools are connected through their education regional office and are focused on the needs of schools, staff and community.



Regardless of location or context, all Western Australian students should have access to high quality education with a range of opportunities open to them during school and beyond.



330,939

students enrolled in
WA public schools



20.9%

of public school
students in
non-metro regions



833

public schools across
8 education regions



304

public schools in
non-metro regions

Kimberley

23 public schools
5,324 students

Pilbara

29 public schools
9,829 students

Midwest

46 public schools
7,817 students

North Metropolitan

256 public schools
122,830 students

South Metropolitan

273 public schools
138,848 students

South West

99 public schools
29,695 students

Wheatbelt

69 public schools
8,645 students

Goldfields

38 public schools
7,951 students

Our vision for regional education

Aspirations for all: our students, our people, our schools – our system, outlines our firm commitment to providing every student in Western Australia with an education that enables them to achieve their potential, wherever they live.

This Regional Education Strategy builds on those aspirations and outlines our vision for students in the regions to have equitable educational opportunities to achieve their potential and put them on a pathway to a successful future, no matter their geographic location. We want them to have access to the supports they need for their learning and their wellbeing so that when they finish school, they are well equipped and confident to take the next step in their lives whatever that may be.

As regional communities evolve and change, so should our provision of education to them – delivering public education that is innovative, creative, and engaging, in settings that inspire students to achieve their best. Our school staff will work side by side with communities to know and understand the aspirations that they have for their future generations.

Our strategy enables our staff to advance the learning of students, support families' aspirations for their children, and make an active contribution to the local community. We want all families to feel like they are partners in the education of their children, and we want our staff to experience fulfilment in their work, so they want to stay for the long term.

We've seen the success of regional schools that have formed partnerships with local industry, like the Pilbara Education Partnership and the Karratha and Roebourne Education Initiative. These programs involve schools working closely with industry to create employment pathways for our students. The WA Government recognises these valuable outcomes, so we're encouraging leaders to look at similar opportunities in their own communities.

This strategy will empower our regional leaders to determine the future directions of public school education in regional settings. Our Directors of Education in the regions will facilitate initiatives, both current and new, built on 4 pillars:

Pillar 1: Building and supporting our regional workforce

Pillar 2: Expanding curriculum delivery

Pillar 3: Strengthening support for student wellbeing

Pillar 4: Developing partnerships to create opportunity

Ongoing strategy development to deliver success

We want to build on the great work already happening in our regional schools, and across the system, in one coordinated approach.

We recognise that sustainability of initiatives that are working well, and those with the potential to make a real difference, is important.

To support this, we will task our Directors of Education in the regions and education regional offices, with providing ongoing leadership for the implementation of initiatives, sensitive to local contexts, and to inform the development of future priorities as part of a regional education vision for Western Australia.

While the experiences across the 6 regions differed, there are common themes:

- attraction and retention of quality teachers, leaders and support staff
- access to a broad range of curriculum, including specialist subjects for students
- innovative teaching and learning that is relevant to local context
- visibility of post-school pathways and opportunities for students
- connecting schools, students, and families with support services
- infrastructure that is well maintained and designed to meet local needs.

The regions will be further supported by work undertaken by the Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (RREAC) who provide advice to the Minister on education and training issues in rural and remote areas of WA and for whom the Department provides secretariat services.

We are committed to making a difference to the lives of students in regional, rural and remote communities.



Pillar 1: Building and supporting our regional workforce

Efforts to attract and retain quality leaders, teachers and allied professionals in regional areas requires an understanding of local context and needs.

We will empower Directors of Education in the regions to promote local community members to become our workforce of the future and pursue career pathways in their local communities.

Examples of current initiatives

Additional attraction and retention incentive (ARI)

The ARI is a major investment designed to attract and retain teachers and school administrators in some regional and remote schools that deliver secondary education.

Expansion of the Pre-service Development Program (PDP)

The PDP provides pre-service teachers with supported exposure to regional professional experiences and horizon short courses to retrain into teaching areas of need.

Targeted training for allied professionals in the regions

Aboriginal Islander Education Officers and Education Assistants are provided with professional learning to support students in the early years with the acquisition of literacy and numeracy.

Growing great leaders in our schools

The 'Growing our leaders in country schools' trial supports permanent teachers and non-principal school administrators who hold a substantive position in a metropolitan school to complete a 3-year principal appointment in a nominated regional school.

Future opportunities

School-based education support qualification

The course, offered through the School of Isolated and Distance Education, is available to community members in regional areas to assist them gain qualifications, and experience, to support students in their learning and development from Kindergarten to Year 12, under the guidance of a teacher.

Workload reduction initiatives

A range of initiatives are being progressed to address workload pressures for teachers and school leaders. This includes the Generative AI pilot which is exploring the impact of AI on reducing teacher workload by generating tailored lesson plans and teaching resources. The platform is being developed to support teachers in all classrooms, but with a particular focus on the more challenging contexts, including multi-age classes and teaching unfamiliar year levels or learning areas.

International teacher recruitment

This initiative is evolving rapidly, with new strategies emerging to address the challenges of attracting and retaining quality teachers. It delivers high quality, experienced staff to our regional schools. They bring expertise and a willingness to learn about their new community and country.

Principal wellbeing

We are strengthening support to provide more choice and targeted wellbeing initiatives to principals. This will be achieved through a comprehensive initiative that includes a wellbeing services panel, targeted funding to schools, enhanced access to counselling and mediation services, a refocus of collegiate principal support and dedicated coordination to ensure principals can access tailored, high-quality support.

Pillar 2: Expanding curriculum delivery

Our schools have an important role in ensuring students have access to educational pathways that build on their strengths and interests. We want to ensure our regional schools are equipped to embrace and overcome any geographical challenges they may face in delivering a broad curriculum and meeting the learning needs and aspirations of their students.

Ensuring access to quality education programs, taught by quality teachers, as well as access to supports and services enables students to fully participate in their learning. Our Directors of Education in the regions will continue influencing school networks to focus on student engagement, quality teaching and staff development.

Examples of current initiatives

Quality Teaching Strategy (QTS)

The QTS is the cornerstone of our efforts to improve teaching in our public schools. It brings together programs, services and supports for principals and teachers to build cultures of teaching excellence that develop, implement and sustain effective classroom practice.

Enhance curriculum delivery of district high schools

Ongoing \$5 million per year to enhance curriculum delivery and expand access to specialist student support services.

Country Week Assistance Payment

Expands access for regional students by reducing travel and accommodation costs, enabling more schools to participate in this key extracurricular event and ensuring students from remote areas have greater opportunities to connect, compete and engage.

Kimberley Schools Project

The Kimberley Schools Project is designed to build on and support existing strategies to accelerate learning for all children, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for Aboriginal students in Kimberley schools and communities.

Scaling up success in remote schools

The Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools Program provides ongoing coaching and resources to support the embedding of the targeted teaching approach, supports consistent practices in schools and works with schools to deliver co-designed community initiatives.

Small Group Tuition

Small Group Tuition provides targeted literacy and numeracy support to students in 350 public schools, helping improve learning outcomes and reduce teacher workload. This initiative reflects the State Government's commitment to equitable education and effective classroom support.

Future opportunities

Ngaparrtji Ngaparrtji Two-way Learning

The program supports participating school teams to build partnerships with local Aboriginal communities and connect the Western Australian Curriculum: Science to Aboriginal knowledge. At the program's core is the development of culturally responsive teaching and learning programs.

Enhancing learning opportunities for multi-age classes

Children in these classes are provided with additional support through the School of Isolated and Distance Education to ensure foundational skills are taught at the required level for all students, particularly in mathematics and science.

Pillar 3: Strengthening support for student wellbeing

Our objectives are to foster positive and safe school environments and give every student a sense of mastery and ensure students are connected to the support they need. To have in place a whole school approach to student wellbeing, we will strengthen collaboration with other agencies, service providers and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation sector.

Directors of Education in the regions will work together with families to support schools to positively contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of their students.

Examples of current initiatives

Guidelines for schools

We have developed comprehensive guidelines to support schools with documented planning and case management, alongside advice and professional learning on whole school approaches for student wellbeing. These resources acknowledge the unique experiences of schools in rural, regional, and remote areas and will help principals to apply learnings to their communities.

Schools of Alternative Learning Settings

We have expanded the Alternative Learning Settings (ALS) to include 8 of the 12 programs in regional centres. These programs work with students to effect positive change in behaviour.

Small school funding

An additional \$5.1 million was allocated in 2025 to support small schools, of which many are in our regions. From 2026, this additional investment will be doubled and provided to schools on an ongoing basis.

Student Wellbeing and Care – Future Directions

'Future directions' is our position on how school staff can best contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of students. It focuses on supporting students through connection and belonging, mastery and accomplishment, and an early identification of needs.

Complex Behaviour Support Coordinators

Regional schools want more expertise close by and in 2025, complex behaviour support coordinators who live and work in the regions will be introduced. These coordinators will work alongside teachers and school leaders to embed approaches that increase student engagement and teacher efficacy.

Future opportunities

Connected Community School trial

This place-based initiative aims to examine ways schools can connect their students with government and non-government services to improve educational and wellbeing outcomes. Four schools have been selected to participate in the 4-year trial, including Roebourne District High School.

School Breakfast Program

This initiative promotes student wellbeing and readiness to learn, alongside an investment to enhance healthy lunch options through upgraded school canteens. The School Breakfast Program is expanding to support over 680 schools, ensuring students vulnerable to food insecurity have access to free, nutritious breakfasts 5 days a week.

Pillar 4: Developing partnerships

Education is a shared responsibility.

Directors of Education Regions will encourage regional community stakeholders and businesses to actively engage in shaping education in their community to support the early years and school readiness and create career pathways that include further education, training or employment opportunities for local school leavers.

Partnerships between schools, universities, TAFE, and other training providers, offer a range of opportunities aligned with the aspirations of regional students.

Examples of current initiatives

KindiLink

KindiLink is a play-and-learn initiative for Aboriginal children who are not old enough to enrol in school. Children and their parents attend 6 hours each week at participating schools.

Regional coordinating committees

This partnership between government agencies, training providers and local industry, facilitates career pathways that include further education, training or employment opportunities for local school leavers.

Regional VET coordinating committees

Each region's regional VET advisory group (RVAG) facilitates partnerships between schools, training providers and local industries to improve student access to training opportunities and pathways. Schools access support from RVAG to help deliver effective VET programs for students.

District Leadership Groups (DLG)

Each DLG includes a core membership of the most senior regional representatives from the Departments of Communities, Education, Health, and Justice, as well as the WA Police Force and Mental Health Commission. They identify shared local priorities, develop strategies to address local priorities and deliver collaborative initiatives to address local priorities.

Regional workforce coordinators

These coordinators will provide support, quality assurance and advice to schools to build relationships between schools, training providers and industry. They will support schools to build partnerships to further develop the professional knowledge and capability of school staff delivering vocational education and training programs.

Future opportunities

Regional University Study Hubs

Regional and remote students can use these facilities to support their study of tertiary courses from any Australian institution. This program takes an innovative approach to improve access to tertiary education for regional and remote students.

Collaboration with mining, farming and agricultural organisations and Aboriginal organisations

Collaborative efforts can promote sustainable practices by sharing knowledge and resources. This can lead to better negotiation power, joint investments, and increased funding opportunities.

Partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)

We are committed to creating culturally responsive public schools that provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to see themselves and their identities reflected in their learning environment. Partnerships with ACCOs help to build culturally responsive schools by meeting the unique needs of Aboriginal students, including for wellbeing, engagement, attendance and successful transitions.

Next steps

The Regional Education Strategy will deliver equitable, high-impact education across Western Australia's regional communities. With our aspirations now clearly defined, we are focused on translating it into meaningful action.

Our next steps will focus on:

Empowering regional leadership to drive locally informed decisions that reflect the unique needs and aspirations of each community.

Embedding successful initiatives and scaling what works, ensuring initiatives are not only responsive but also resilient and future-focused.

Strengthening collaboration across education, industry and community, while leveraging local resources and knowledge, to create integrated support systems for students and families.

Investing in people by supporting career development for regional staff and attracting new talent to build a strong, stable workforce.

This strategy is dynamic and tailored for continuous improvement. Through deep community engagement, data-informed decision-making, and a shared commitment to student success, we will shape a future where every regional student thrives.



Shaping the future