

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW1001_12

Senator McKenzie provided in writing.

Question

Programs Specifically for Regional Areas

Do you run any programs specifically for regional areas, where educational attainment is lower? What programs, if any, do you run that encourage students to choose a particular pathway, for example, to address particular skill shortages? Do any of these programs include agricultural education? Could they?

Answer

The Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Initiative provides \$19.1 million over three years (2011-12 to 2013-14) to engage 34 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators (RESJ Coordinators) in regional communities.

The role of the RESJ Coordinators is to drive local strategies to increase participation in school education, tertiary education and skills development as well as improving local connections to employment. The Coordinators work with local stakeholders, including Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees in the 46 non-metropolitan RDA regions. They are currently developing Regional Education, Skills and Jobs (RESJ) Plans, built from local knowledge and regional data (such as Year 12 attainment) to improve participation and outcomes in education, training and employment in regional Australia. It is expected that, in regions where the need is identified, the plans will include strategies to increase participation in further education, including in the field of agricultural science and related disciplines.

In recognition of the unique needs of schools in rural and remote areas, the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program has identified a range of Certificate III qualifications in Agriculture and Horticulture that can be offered in Trade Training Centres to students in rural areas and/or where the applicant can demonstrate significant support from local industry and where these skills are in demand.

Key priorities for the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program are to:

- establish regional skills hubs whereby secondary schools in rural and regional locations develop partnerships for improved trade training delivery; and
- support secondary school communities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students from rural, regional or other disadvantaged communities.

In addition, a significant number of Trade Training Centres have been announced for and are operational in, regional Australia (which includes rural, remote and very remote areas). To date:

- of the over 1060 schools that make up the announced trade training centres, 676 (over 60%) are in regional Australia: and,
- of the total announced funding of \$1.2 billion for trade training centres, over \$700 million (over 60%) is for Trade Training Centres in regional Australia.

In terms of addressing areas of low attainment, the Australian Government is providing \$1.5 billion over seven years (2008-09 to 2014-15) to support the Smarter Schools National Partnership for Low Socio-economic Status School Communities to provide education reform activities in approximately 1700 low socio-economic status schools around the country. This funding will be matched by co-investment from state and territory governments over the life of the partnership.