

**INQUIRY INTO MEASUREMENT AND OUTCOME-BASED
FUNDING IN NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOLS**

Organisation: Country Women's Association of NSW

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Country Women's Association of NSW

*Incorporated in 1931 by an Act of NSW Parliament
Constituent Society of the Associated Country Women of the World*

31 August 2019

Hon Mark Latham MLC
Chair- Portfolio Committee No. 3- Education
Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New
South Wales schools
NSW Legislative Assembly
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Sent via online portal

Dear Chair,

Re: Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools

The Country Women's Association of NSW (CWA of NSW) has a very strong interest in education policy and in particular, equitable access to high quality education for rural, regional and remote (RRR) children and students. This, along with improved and equitable health services for RRR areas, is a foundational principle of the CWA of NSW.

Some of our recent and historic policy on the subject of education is as follows:

"That the government directs the Board of Studies Teaching Educational Standards (BOSTES) to use Teacher fees to ensure that professional development opportunities are made equally available to those at regional centres with no additional monetary disadvantage due to location; and that BOSTES investigate other methods of delivering professional development opportunities".

"That the NSW Minister for Education introduce a more flexible system for staffing ratios in small rural schools."

"That the CWA of NSW urge the Minister for Education to provide adequate staffing for state schools with particular consideration given to country regions."

"That CWA of NSW urge the Minister for Education to consider factors other than just the number of enrolled children when appointing staff to country schools".

The CWA of NSW is supportive of the continued advancement of our education system, and of constantly examining the structure and method of school funding to ensure NSW students are continuing to improve. We are also supporters of ensuring that public funding is used to deliver improved outcomes, and that the public have transparency on those outcomes. However, we do have serious concerns that a purely 'outcomes based funding' model is not suitable for rural and regional schools, given the special considerations and disadvantages that these schools face.

Educational disadvantage in rural and regional schools has been well documented: location and isolation, high-teacher turnover, low retention rates, school provision such as school size and staffing (less teachers), lack of program breadth, and lack of

capacity to raise funds, are some of the factors for this disadvantage. Wider societal factors including economic conditions , limited cultural facilities in the community, and local industry structure, are also attributable¹.

Whilst we do support improved school quality – we must emphasise the importance of equity first and foremost. The CWA of NSW submits that for any 'outcomes-based' model, schools in rural and regional NSW are given special consideration for their inherent disadvantage. Schools in rural and regional NSW should not be funded according to outcomes in comparison to schools major cities, but rather according to outcomes in the context of the region.

Yours faithfully,

Danica Leys
CEO

¹ Lamb, Stephen, and Glover, Sara *Educational Disadvantage and Regional and Rural Schools* Mitchell Institute for Health and Education Policy , Victoria University , 2014 page 65, pages 65-70.

Social Issues Committee. Leonie Fish

Response to Paper re. Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in NSW Schools.

As a former Primary/Infants' teacher I am very concerned that the needs of many children are not being met.

It is not just funding for each school to be considered. In my last years of teaching, students on practicum placement and new teachers often did not have sufficient education themselves. They often did not display a love of learning, couldn't spell, had difficulty writing grammatically correct sentences, and their own speech, with endings missing (eg. goin'), and incorrect speech eg (yous) was most inadequate for a good teacher.

Two articles in 'The Sydney Morning Herald' this week have highlighted the plight of many schools and students. In my own town, a high school has had a drop of 50% in the last 10 years. They are indeed limited in their subject choice, particularly for their HSC. So more students find another school to meet their needs and things get worse!

One high school on the Northern Beaches was built in the 60's as the population of young families grew. Homes became 'empty nests', school was demolished for more housing, now with homes back again with children, there are fewer places to find a public school that is not already over-crowded..

The other article mentioned that although schools are given basic requirements, 'basic' is absolutely below par. I cannot believe that schools need to compete for funding in their area. AND..... for new chairs to replace 20 year-old chairs!!!!

How can children have the best education if they have a regular and frequent turnover of staff. Teachers are given subjects to teach that they have little or no experience or knowledge. Rural and remote areas are often difficult to retain teachers.....well, if they are asked to teach subjects with no expertise, everyone suffers.

Research needs to occur to see what is the problem. I know it is a very complex problem, and certainly not easily solved.