A fair go: the Federal Government's strategy for rural education and training.

Dept of Employment, Education and Training.


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A Fair Go

The Federal Government's Strategy for Rural Education & Training
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Minister for Employment, Education and Training
Minister for Primary Industries and Energy
Foreword

Rural Australians have traditionally participated in education and training to a lesser degree than their metropolitan counterparts.

Low population densities, widely disparate population and growth rates, economic and environmental diversity, and sheer distance, makes it difficult for many people to get access to education and training outside the capital cities.

This is a major concern for the Federal Government.

Five million Australians live outside the metropolitan regions. The Government believes that those people should be able to be fully involved in the wide range of education and training opportunities available.

The Federal Government is also keen to enhance the skills base of our primary industries. The rural sector has made, and continues to make, a very substantial contribution to the prosperity of our nation.

Education and training has a vital role to play in ensuring that Australian primary industries remain productive, competitive, innovative, and in tune with international market requirements.

Better educated rural workers means a greater capacity to adopt technological advances, to develop new and more sophisticated marketing techniques, and to work more safely.

The basis of the Federal Government's approach to rural education and training is two-fold:

— to ensure that broad-based education and training initiatives are appropriate and effective in non-metropolitan areas; and

— to target specific initiatives directly at particular problems faced by rural Australians.

The Labor Government has made consistent efforts during its term in office to make its education and training initiatives sensitive to the needs of rural Australians. This strategy demonstrates our continued commitment to improve rural Australians' access to education and training in years to come.

J S Dawkins, MP
Minister for Employment, Education and Training

J C Kerin, MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Energy
1. **Does Australia need a strategy for rural* education and training?**

Education and training plays a crucial role in improving the life options and furthering social justice for all Australians. In the current economic climate, education and training has taken on a new significance in providing a skilled and adaptable labour force, capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

The Australian economy is undergoing substantial structural change. Our industries need to continue to make improvements in the quality of their products while maintaining and improving their efficiency to remain competitive. These adjustments are essential if Australians are to continue to enjoy the prosperity to which we have become accustomed.

Given the Government’s current emphasis on the restructuring of Australian industry, particularly in the areas of manufacturing and high technology industries, it is important that rural based industries are fully catered for.

The non-metropolitan economy provides jobs for 30 per cent of the workforce. Agriculture and mining industries (including processing) contribute about 5 per cent to our GNP, and employ one fifth of the non-metropolitan workforce. Their products provide about 82 per cent of Australian exports.

It is widely recognised that a skilled workforce is the cornerstone of a successful economy. It provides an environment which encourages increased investment in new technologies, as well as the adoption of more safe and efficient work practices. As the rural sector has a key role in the process of structural adjustment, it is important to ensure that rural Australians have adequate access to education and training.

While the education and training needs of rural Australians are similar to those of their metropolitan counterparts, the isolation of rural communities often makes it more difficult for Governments to effectively meet these needs.

A low level of participation by young rural people in secondary education is one consequence of the disadvantages some rural Australians face in getting access to education and training.

* For the purpose of this statement ‘rural or non-metropolitan Australia’ means all areas outside the capital cities and the other major metropolitan conglomerates of Geelong, Gold Coast, Newcastle and Wollongong. It includes a number of large provincial centres, as well as smaller country towns and communities, and individual family properties.
As the following graph illustrates, the number of rural students completing Year 12, while increasing, is consistently below the number of metropolitan students completing Year 12.

**Estimated Year 12 Completion Rate**

Urban and Rural Regions
1984-1987, Australia

Note:
1. Victoria is not included in 1986 calculations, as the data for that year was not available when the data base was assembled.
2. ACT is not included in the calculations for 1984 and 1985 due to corruption of the data.
3. ACT is calculated entirely as an urban component, due to the non-definition of any areas in the territory as rural.

Low participation in education is due to a range of factors, some of which are outside the Government's control. However, the Federal Government is committed to doing whatever possible to ensure that rural people are encouraged to participate in education and training.

The transfer rates of country school leavers into higher education also appear to be consistently below those of their metropolitan counterparts. This is partly because higher education places are concentrated in capital cities. As a result, a number of non-metropolitan (and outer-metropolitan) regions have a significantly below average provision of higher education.

This rural education and training strategy will assist in giving rural Australians improved access to all areas of education and training.
2. The Government's Objectives for Education and Training in Rural Australia

The Federal Government's objectives in rural education and training are to:

(a) increase non-metropolitan school retention rates to Year 12 in line with the national objective of 65%;

(b) increase the transfer rates of students from school to post high school education to levels comparable to those in metropolitan areas so that more non-metropolitan students transfer to TAFE and higher education;

(c) increase overall participation in education and training so that the proportion of the non-metropolitan workforce with qualifications after high school approaches the national average.

These objectives recognise the role of education and training in providing all Australians with the skills they need for a rewarding, full and productive life. It is important for rural Australians to acquire these skills if rural industries are to maintain their efficiency and competitiveness in the world market.

3. The Rural Population

At the time of the 1986 Census Australia's population was 15.6 million. More than 30%, or just under 5 million, lived outside the major urban areas. The majority of Australia's most rapidly growing centres are located outside the major cities.

While it is difficult to generalise about the rural population, rural people have special needs, particularly in regard to education and training.

For example, many people in rural Australia are required by their work and circumstances to be more mobile than people in metropolitan Australia. These people are adversely affected by the varying standards of assessment and accreditation in use between schools and between education institutions—particularly when they move interstate.

Rural women, especially those in smaller communities can be disadvantaged when trying to gain access to government and community services, especially health education, training and employment services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in rural Australia are often among the most isolated members of the rural community. Aboriginal people have the highest levels of unemployment. Almost half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live in rural or remote areas which do not offer many employment opportunities.

Some rural areas also have high concentrations of ethnic groups. Reaching non-English speaking people living in rural settings is another challenge for governments.
There are about 5,400 schools in rural Australia and in 1986, nearly 1.2 million students attended rural schools. This represented 39 per cent of total school enrolments. Most rural school students have reasonable daily access to a school near their home. However, a minority of students need to travel extensively each day to attend school. About 15,000 children do not have ready access to a school. The problem of access to school for many rural students in the vital Years 11 and 12 is particularly acute.

The need to provide special services for rural people comes not so much from the specific characteristics of the rural population, as from the need to make special efforts to ensure that the problems of isolation and distance do not restrict rural Australians' access to education and training.

4. The Labor Government's Commitment to Rural Australia

The problems faced by rural people in gaining access to education and training have been well documented in several recent reports.

Following the Government’s Economic and Rural Policy Statement in April 1986, two major reviews were conducted on schooling and post-secondary education in rural Australia.

Schooling in Rural Australia (1988) was prepared by the former Commonwealth Schools Commission. It examined the issue of school retention rates among rural students. Factors identified as influencing school retention and completion rates among rural students included lack of proximity to tertiary education institutions and limited curriculum choices.

A report Post-Secondary Rural Education (1987) identified gaps in the provision of rural education after students leave school. The report proposed strategies to develop greater access to post-secondary education for rural Australians. The report suggested that rural Australians needed more information about the availability of education and its benefits.

A range of similar concerns were identified by several other reports such as: Education in Rural Australia by the Rural and Allied Industries Council; Life Has Never Been Easy—Report of the Survey of Women in Rural Australia by the Office of the Status of Women and the Country Women's Association, and Overcoming Distance; Isolated Rural Women's Access to TAFE Across Australia by the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development.

The Government has considered the issues raised by these reports and has responded in two major ways.

First we have ensured that our general policies and programs are more relevant to Rural Australia. Second, we have introduced special initiatives to directly benefit non-metropolitan areas.
Broad Initiatives

In 1988, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training released *Strengthening Australia's Schools* which launched a major initiative to improve cooperation and coordination between State Education Ministers. As part of this initiative the Federal Government has worked hard to encourage State Governments to adopt a more uniform approach to school starting ages, and common curriculum frameworks. The Federal Government is concerned to assist the State Education Ministers to eliminate unnecessary differences between their education systems, in recognition of the problems faced by children from mobile families who regularly move home. The effort to promote common school starting ages and to develop common curriculum frameworks will continue through the Australian Education Council, a body which comprises all State Education Ministers and the Federal Government.

The Government is developing, in cooperation with State and Territory Governments, arrangements to allow TAFE facilities to be used to teach courses offered by higher education institutions particularly in rural areas where TAFE colleges are the major or sole post-secondary providers of education. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) is well represented in rural Australia. More than half of the 215 major TAFE institutions are located in the non-metropolitan areas with more than 1,000 ancillary centres. Such arrangements already apply in various parts of Australia and the Federal Government is keen to encourage more links.

One way in which the Government seeks to promote links between TAFE colleges and higher education institutions is through resource agreement with the States. When negotiating TAFE resource agreements with State and Territory TAFE authorities, the Federal Government seeks to ensure that closer cooperation between educational sectors (i.e. higher education and TAFE, schools and TAFE), in rural areas are given proper recognition. This is especially important in the area of sharing resources and transfers of 'credit' for courses undertaken at either institution.

Federal grants for TAFE this year will total $309 million. Of the $151.7 million allocated for TAFE capital works last year, about $54 million was allocated to build TAFE facilities in rural areas.

A significant new initiative, with major benefits for rural Australia, is the encouragement of the amalgamation of higher education institutions. This initiative will create greater efficiency in the use of resources and in meeting the needs of rural students. Amalgamations will enable institutions to offer a broader range of services to a wider student population, especially in rural areas.

In the 1988/89 Budget, the Federal Labor Government indicated that student accommodation for higher education students, particularly low cost accommodation, was a high priority. The Government recognises that access to suitable accommodation is important if we are to achieve increased participation by rural students in higher education.
$20 million has been provided as a special initiative to support student residential accommodation particularly low cost accommodation. This year, $12.3 million will be provided for residences and further projects will be funded in 1990 and 1991.

Financial assistance for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to continue their education is provided under the Aboriginal Secondary Assistance Scheme (ABSEC) and the Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme (ABSTUDY). The cost of these two programs in 1988/89 will be almost $80 million. The Federal Government has also committed $10 million over the next three years to build facilities to enhance the participation of Aboriginal people in TAFE colleges.

The Hawke Government is committed to developing a National Aboriginal Education Policy to improve the participation of Aboriginals in education. A working group has been set up to develop the Policy in consultation with Aboriginal people. The Policy is expected to be finalised by the middle of this year.

In November 1987 the Prime Minister announced the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) which represents a major commitment by the Federal Government to develop employment, economic and educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The AEDP's objective is to achieve employment and income equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by the year 2000. As part of the AEDP, the Department of Employment, Education and Training administers several Aboriginal employment and training programs for which $78 million has been provided in 1988/89.

The Government funds a range of programs to assist Australia's schools. Federal spending on Australian schools, both government and non-government, will come to almost $2 billion this year.

About $246 million of this is allocated for capital grants to help schools to improve their facilities. For the 1985-87 calendar years, 215 of the 521 new capital grant approvals (or 43.6 per cent of the total) were for projects in schools outside the capital cities and major urban areas. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools assisted are in rural and isolated areas.

The Federal Government also funds specific purpose schools programs which are directed at groups in the community with special needs. In the case of the Disadvantaged Schools Program, at least $10 million of the $43.6 million allocated under the program will this year be directed at schools which are not in capital cities.

Last year, the Federal Government provided $2.67 billion to the States for higher education institutions. This year, overall national spending on higher education will be $2.81 billion, growing in real terms to $3.1 billion in 1991. Operating grants to higher education institutions in 1988/89 will total $2.5 billion of which about $275 million has been allocated to institutions in rural areas.
One million dollars for each year of the 1989-91 triennium has also been provided for more than 400 additional child care places for disadvantaged students undertaking higher education of which about half are in rural and outer metropolitan areas.

Rural students will receive income support of about $190 million under AUSTUDY in 1988/89. A special benefit exists for rural students in that two levels of allowance are payable for dependent students: as well as the standard rate for students there is an away-from-home rate for students who need to leave home to take up study.

AUSTUDY also assists rural students by providing a fares allowance. The Government reimburses the total cost of three return trips a year between home and the institution at which the student is studying.

JOBSTART is a wage subsidy program which offers subsidies to employers who provide jobs and work experience to job seekers who have been out of work for long periods. It also provides support to people who face other disadvantages in obtaining work. In 1988/89, about 55,400 people are expected to be placed in work under JOBSTART at a cost of $97 million. About 43 per cent of them will be from rural areas.

Under the JOBTRAIN Program assistance is given to disadvantaged job seekers to get a job or go on to further education or training. It does this by providing vocational training closely linked to individual needs and the local labour market. In 1988/89, 12,500 15-20 year olds will be assisted, costing about $30 million. Of these, about 5,500 will be assisted in rural areas at an estimated cost of $13 million. In the same period, 21,000 people over 21 years will be assisted at a cost of $57 million. About 7,600 people are expected to be from rural areas. The rural component will cost about $20 million.

The Australian Traineeship System (ATS) provides special assistance to employers, trainees and off-the-job education and training providers. The ATS is a scheme developed by the Hawke Labor Government which provides young people with on and off the job training in a range of industries. This education and training helps them gain the skills needed to develop successful careers. Trainees from rural areas required to live away from home may be eligible for a living-away-from-home allowance.

Projected spending on ATS in 1988/89 is $45.2 million, of which $13.5 million will be spent in non-metropolitan Australia. Since the start of the ATS, 24,000 trainees have commenced, of whom 7,000 (30 per cent) have been in non-metropolitan areas. Five hundred and seventy traineeships have been provided in the “rural” industries with 120 in the forest/timber industry.

The Industry Training Services Program aids and stimulates the development of training through all sectors of industry and commerce including small business.

Assistance is provided to a national network of 117 Industry Training Committees (ITCs) in 18 major industries. These represent more than half
the private sector workforce. ITCs are industry-based companies with representatives from employers, employees and governments.

The Federal Government provides financial assistance to offset the operational costs of ITCs, including the employment of training development specialists and costs associated with pilot testing training and research.

The main rural based industry groups involved are: rural forest industries; fishing; and drilling. The automotive, food processing and road transport ITCs also have a significant impact in rural communities.

About $3.1 million will be spent on ITC activities in non-metropolitan Australia in 1988/89.

Specific Initiatives

The Innovative Rural Education and Training Program, administered by the Department of Employment, Education and Training and jointly funded with the Department of Primary Industries and Energy will provide $4.75 million over the next three years to industry groups, education institutions and community bodies to develop innovative courses. The courses will be relevant to industry needs and will feature innovative methods of delivering education and training to rural areas.

Applications for grants under the Innovative Rural Education and Training Program were called for in October last year and 297 requests totalling over $11.5 million were received. Of the 297 applications 62 have been recommended for immediate funding, costing almost $2 million.

The proposals which have been recommended for funding so far encompass a wide variety of projects with considerable support provided by industry and local communities. Several projects will provide ways to improve access to education and training. Many of the projects fall within the following categories: mobile training modules; cooperation between schools and TAFE institutions; farm business and financial management; safety in agriculture; computing, and use of new technologies, particularly by isolated women.

Under the Marketing Skills Program, administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Energy, $5 million is available over three years to provide a series of courses in international marketing skills for marketers of agricultural products. The program introduces modern marketing techniques and aims to stimulate a more innovative approach to marketing primary products. The program is directed towards smaller, developing industries which lack marketing expertise.

The Rural Education Access Program is also administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Energy. In 1988/89 more than $500,000 is being provided to local community groups for education and training activities. Projects funded under REAP so far include: a remedial literacy and numeracy course, an analysis of the education needs of business people in a particular region, and providing relief milkers for farm...
apprentices to enable them to attend courses, and farm financial management seminars.

External studies offered by higher education institutions are of vital importance to people in rural and geographically isolated areas. For many of these people, external study is their only means of access to higher education. Growth in opportunities for rural people to study externally and improvements in the quality of external teaching are key elements in the Government's overall equity strategy for higher education.

In its Policy Statement on Higher Education, the White Paper, the Government set out its objectives to enhance the provision of distance education in Australia.

The Policy Statement outlined a model to achieve these objectives through the designation of about six Distance Education Centres (DECs). These will be funded by the Federal Government to develop, produce and deliver external studies. Designated DEC institutions would have a broadly based educational profile and meet national as well as State needs in external studies.

In September 1988, all higher education institutions were invited to submit expressions of interest in DEC designation and fourteen applications were received in total. The Government's decision is outlined under the next section.

In 1986, recognising the special problems faced by rural women in gaining access to government services and information, the Federal Government introduced the Rural Women's Access Grants (RWAG) Program. The RWAG Program aims to improve the access of women in rural areas to education, training, employment, health and transport through providing grants for small scale operational and research projects. One-off grants are available to non-profit, community-based organisations, groups or individuals.

In 1987 $100,000 was allocated for 17 projects under the RWAG program. In 1988 the program's funding was increased to $200,000 of which another $100,000 was allocated to provide additional support for education and training projects. RWAG complements existing grant programs for women, such as the Women's Research and Employment Initiatives Program (WREIP) and the National Agenda for Women Grants Programs (NAWGP), in that it is specifically aimed at assisting rural women.

Of special relevance to rural schools is the Federal Government’s Country Areas Program (CAP). This year, $11.5 million has been provided for CAP to assist rural students who are disadvantaged by restricted access to social, cultural and educational activities and services. Rural and isolated areas covering about 70 per cent of Australia are eligible for funding under the CAP.

Last year, CAP funds were distributed between 920 government and 122 non-government schools. A map of the areas prescribed for CAP funding in 1988 is included in Appendix A.
In 1987/88 support under CAP was given for the use of communications technology (for example video packages, telephone networks for schools); and a high cluster project involving several high schools, a technical school and two education centres. They provided improved technological and practical studies for students, a common approach to literacy and numeracy instruction, and a technical Year 12 as an alternative to the HSC year.

The Country Areas Program also subsidises tours by theatre groups, dance companies, orchestras and school bands to provide cultural experiences not normally available to rural communities. CAP also provided mobile classrooms for correspondence pupils and those in small isolated schools; it paid for visiting teachers to give music instruction in small schools; and it helped with student travel to regional centres and cities for work experience and visits to specialist education facilities, such as science laboratories and technical workshops.

The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme is designed to assist families whose children do not have ready access to government schooling or who need to live away from home to attend a particular school because of a disability. It provides allowances for eligible primary and secondary students who board, study by correspondence or live in a second family home to enable them to attend school.

While AIC allowances are means-tested, all eligible students attract an income test-free payment of $989 a year for boarders, and $500 for students doing correspondence courses.

Since 1987 the top rate for boarders aged 16 years and over has been linked to AUSTUDY. From the beginning of this year, all income-tested benefits for secondary students in this age group have been paid under the AUSTUDY scheme. This leaves AIC to cater for those who qualify for no more than the income-test-free payment as well as for all those isolated students under 16. All students over 16, whether receiving AUSTUDY or not, who qualify for the AIC scheme under its distance criteria, continue to get the means-test free allowance.

From the beginning of this year, the assets test has been applied to AIC and AUSTUDY, however the income-test-free entitlement has not been affected. The Federal Government's decision to discount by half the value of a farm or business asset in which the parent works, takes into account the need to ensure that the measure does not have an adverse impact on rural families. The assets test is estimated to affect less than 1000 (or 5%) of the 14,500 AIC recipients.

To make sure that rural students have greater access to information about AUSTUDY, all Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) offices now provide information to students about AUSTUDY and initially process AUSTUDY applications.

Information on all Federal Government programs and services of relevance to rural people is contained in the Commonwealth publication *The Rural Book* which was first published in 1987. The 1989 edition is now available.
5. The Way Ahead For Rural Education and Training

The Government intends to monitor and build on its existing rural education and training initiatives in the years ahead. The following initiatives will assist in achieving this goal.

Support for Student Hostels in Rural Areas

The needs of young people undertaking secondary education in country areas and young people required to move from remote communities to undertake secondary education deserve priority attention.

The Federal Government has therefore decided to extend the coverage of its Capital Grants Program to include student hostels sponsored by non-government organisations. In 1989, over $240 million will be available under the capital grants program, to build new facilities or improve existing school facilities throughout Australia.

The improvement in student hostel accommodation likely to result from this decision should encourage more isolated rural students to continue with their education, particularly in Years 11 and 12.

Education and Training Data Base for Rural Students

The Hawke Labor Government recognises, as pointed out in the Post-Secondary Rural Education report, that young people in rural Australia have a particular need for information so they can be more aware of the availability and benefits of education and training opportunities.

There are a number of innovative computerised approaches to compiling data bases, some of which have already been adopted in certain States. These include the Job and Course Explorer computer network which was developed in Victoria and is now in use in a number of States.

Data bases on education and training are also being examined at the tertiary level.

The Federal Government is examining ways of drawing together these developments to ensure that a national data base would avoid duplication and meet the needs of the rural community.

The Government has also asked its chief advisory body, the National Board of Employment, Education and Training, to examine the issue of careers education. NBEET will canvass the most appropriate roles for the key agencies involved in providing careers education for young people, and what steps need to be taken to ensure that students are properly prepared to make career choices.

To achieve an effective national data base for education and training, it is essential to secure the involvement of State and Territory Governments who have constitutional responsibility for education. State and Territory Government input to NBEET's examination of careers education is therefore being sought through the Commonwealth/State Consultative Committee, which met for the first time in March.
NBEET has been asked to give priority to finalising its advice on careers education before the end of May 1989, so that this can be taken into account in developing a national education and training data base.

The Department of Primary Industries and Energy is monitoring these developments and examining possible delivery strategies which would encourage rural people to use such a service.

**Link between NBEET and the Primary and Allied Industries Council**

The National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) and the Primary and Allied Industries Council (PAIC) will, from now on be closely involved in advising the Government on rural education and training matters. Both NBEET and PAIC are broadly representative of industry, unions and academia.

NBEET advises the Minister for Employment, Education and Training and PAIC provides a forum for consultation and advice to the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy. The Government will now require NBEET to consult PAIC on important issues which will affect rural education and training. PAIC will be especially requested to draw attention to any rural education and training issues which it believes should be addressed by NBEET.

The Government places a high priority on improving the effectiveness and accessibility of rural education and training and will look to NBEET, in consultation with PAIC, to provide advice on how best to achieve this.

**Review of the Country Areas Program**

The Country Areas Program (CAP) was established in 1982 to help alleviate significant and persistent educational disadvantage experienced by many rural students.

The Federal Government is committed to maintaining and enhancing the Country Areas Program in recognition of its enormous value to rural schools and their communities. However, the Government is concerned to ensure that CAP continues to provide the best possible service to rural schools, particularly in light of the low rural retention rates in Years 11 and 12.

The Minister for Employment, Education and Training has asked his key advisory body, the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), to examine the effectiveness of CAP in relation to the need to improve school participation and retention in rural areas.

The Government hopes that the link between PAIC and NBEET will bring a wide range of views and experience to bear on the review of the Community Areas Program. NBEET is expected to provide its report on CAP to the Government by December this year.
Discipline Review of Agricultural and Related Education

The Government intends to commission a review of the structure and effectiveness of higher education in agriculture and the related disciplines of soil, water and forestry conservation and management. The review will begin this year and will take about 12 months to complete.

A discipline review in this field is timely. The agricultural and forest industries are increasingly based on advanced technologies and all levels, through financing, marketing and production are becoming more integrated. To be sustainable and efficient these industries will continue to require people who are well trained in the varying facets of the industry, including resource conservation, production, marketing and management.

The support and service industries to the agriculture production sector also need suitably trained personnel to enable it to adopt technologies as they are developed and to cater for changing world markets.

A high proportion of undergraduates in agriculture and related faculties go on to undertake research. Their research plays an important role in ensuring the future competitiveness of our industries and conservation of our resources. It is important that that research should continue to be both of a high standard and appropriately directed.

Enrolments in agriculture and related disciplines form about two per cent of students. However, these courses require relatively high levels of resources and as a result of the Government’s higher education policies, several agricultural faculties and colleges may amalgamate. This review will provide an opportunity to assess the effects of amalgamation and chart new directions in curriculum development and co-ordination of resource use.

The Government regards it as important that the review bring together the needs of higher education and industry. For this reason the Government has accepted that one of the review panel will be a senior agricultural businessman. The terms of reference for the review embrace all aspects related to agriculture and the provision of higher education courses. The terms of reference are attached, in Appendix B.

Eight New Distance Education Centres

After exhaustive assessment and consideration by a team from the Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Higher Education Council, the Government has selected eight institutions to provide distance education teaching material. The eight successful candidates to provide external studies material to higher education students throughout Australia are:

- Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education
- Deakin University
- University of New England
- Mitchell CAE/Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education
- Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education
This is the Government’s preferred configuration. Confirmation of DEC status for institutions in Queensland and for Mitchell CAE and Riverina/Murray Institute will however depend upon the Queensland State Government revising its plans to grant immediate university status to the institutions involved, and the New South Wales Government achieving sensible arrangements for higher education in the Western region.

The eight new Distance Education Centres will have a strong external studies infrastructure, a broad range of courses available or able to be developed, a demonstrated capacity to develop and deliver high quality materials and a willingness to ensure the broadest possible access to geographically isolated areas of Australia will be considered as DECS.

6. A Fair Go For Rural Australia

It is important that the progress made to provide better education and training opportunities to Rural Australia be continued and built upon. Much is already in train to ensure a fair go for rural Australians. The momentum must be maintained. Careful monitoring of progress will be essential. To this end, the Government will ask NBEET, in collaboration with PAIC, to monitor the strategy and issue a report on its progress in October 1990.

The Labor ideal of a fairer and better Australia was paramount in the formulation of this strategy. This rural education and training strategy exemplifies the Government’s determination to deliver the education and training opportunities available in metropolitan areas to all Australians. This is important in terms of individual opportunity and advancement, but is also vital to the development of a better-educated, prosperous and unified Australia.
APPENDIX A

COUNTRY AREAS PROGRAM

Total Areas Prescribed for Funding in 1988

-denotes total areas eligible for CAP funding.

Notes:
1. The town areas of Darwin and Alice Springs are not included in prescribed areas.
2. Ringed areas in Tasmania, including islands, are included in prescribed areas.
APPENDIX B

DISCIPLINE REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED EDUCATION

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

(1) The Review shall:

(a) examine the current provision of education in agricultural production, processing and marketing and in soil, water and forest conservation and management in Australian higher education institutions;

(b) consider the effectiveness of the education provided in meeting the needs of the community for soundly based rural industries underpinned by sustainable resource utilisation practices and for a wider range of employment options; and

(c) having regard to the likely future demand for skills in agriculture, forestry and resource conservation, make recommendations on the future development of agricultural and related education in Australia, including proposals necessary for improvements to the present standard of provision.

(2) The Review is required to produce a report on matters flowing generally from its work and in particular on:

(a) appropriate aims and objectives for institutions offering agricultural and related education in terms of employer and community needs for graduates in such areas of study;

(b) the nature, quality and duration of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in agriculture and related areas, including the extent to which they address the need for improved management skills and the use of new technologies;

(c) the standard and efficiency of teaching, and the nature, extent and quality of research in agriculture and related areas in higher education institutions;

(d) arrangements for consultation and co-operation on the development and provision of courses in agriculture and related areas within and among institutions, with public and private sector employers and with other relevant bodies;

(e) the nature and extent of credit transfer, distance education and other arrangements which seek to enhance opportunities for the acquisition of skills relevant to the needs of the rural economy;
(f) the adequacy of the number of places in agriculture and related education provided by higher education institutions, procedures used for the selection of students and the access to these courses of people from disadvantaged backgrounds including women and socio-economically disadvantaged students;

(g) the effectiveness of resource use and the extent of unnecessary duplication in agricultural and related education;

(h) the training, development, recruitment and retention of academic staff concerned with agricultural and related education, and institutional arrangements for reviewing the performance of such staff; and

(i) trends in the employment of graduates in agriculture and related areas of study and factors which might affect the nature of their transition from higher education to the workforce.
## APPENDIX C

### COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS RELEVANT TO RURAL AUSTRALIA

### PROPOSED EXPENDITURE 1988/89

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Total Expend.</th>
<th>Rural Expend.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Grants</td>
<td>2563.0</td>
<td>275.0</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Grants</td>
<td>107.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCHOOLS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Areas (1989)</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged Schools (1989)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Non-govt. sector funding</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Government sector funding</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Grants (1988)</td>
<td>215.4</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Recurrent Grants (1988)</td>
<td>1400.0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STUDENT ASSISTANCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTUDY</td>
<td>641.0</td>
<td>190.0</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC)</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TAFE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent Grants</td>
<td>121.2</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Grants</td>
<td>184.5</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE R&amp;D Centre</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRAINEESHIPS AND INDUSTRY TRAINING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Training Services</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Traineeship System</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SKILLS TRAINING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Training Program includes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Innovative Training Projects</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—Innovative Rural Education and Training</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRADE TRAINING
Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-Time Training 125.4 NA NA
Special Apprenticeship Training 14.3 NA NA

LABOUR MARKET
JOBSTART 97.0 41.7 43%
JOBTRAIN 87.0 33.0 38%
Innovative Training Projects
—National Skills 3.3 1.0 30%
Relocation Assistance 3.6 2.7 75%

COMMUNITY AND ABORIGINAL
SKILLSHARE 52.0 22.9 44%
Training for Aboriginals 72.2 NA
Employment Enterprise Assist. 6.1
Aboriginal Employment Action 0.08
Aboriginal Enterprise Incentive Scheme 1.0
ABSEC 82.0
ABSTUDY 79.5 NA

* Commonwealth grants to the States for TAFE are made available on a calendar year basis. Grants for recurrent expenditure and for infrastructure equipment are made available as block grants, subject to conditions attaching to resource agreements.

In 1988, infrastructure grants for the construction of TAFE facilities in non-metropolitan Australia amounted to $53.9m out of a total allocation for TAFE capital works of $151.7m.
# SUMMARY

## RECENT AND PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

**AIMED AT RURAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Recent Initiatives</th>
<th>New Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To increase retention rates in line with the Year 12 national average</td>
<td>Additional funding to support an expansion of AUSTUDY</td>
<td>Extend capital grants program to include student hostels sponsored by non-government organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved access for rural students to AUSTUDY through country CES offices</td>
<td>NBEET review of the Country Areas Program particularly school participation and retention rates aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New links to improve NBEET's focus on rural issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development of Aboriginal education policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase transfer rates from school to post-school TAFE and higher education</td>
<td>Improved access for rural students to AUSTUDY through Country CES offices</td>
<td>NBEET structured to take rural issues into account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding of the Innovative Rural Education and Training Program</td>
<td>Discipline Review of Agriculture and Related Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased proportion of Australian Traineeship System (ATS) funds going to non-metropolitan Australia in 1988/89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased number of ATS traineeships in rural and forest/timber industries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Recent Initiatives</td>
<td>New Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase overall participation in education and training so the proportion of the non-metropolitan workforce with post-school qualifications is around the national average</td>
<td>Establishment of:</td>
<td>Establishment of Rural Education Data Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Innovative Rural Education and Training Program</td>
<td>NBEET required to take rural issues into account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Marketing Skills Program</td>
<td>Discipline Review of Agriculture and Related Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rural Education Access Program</td>
<td>Establishment of eight new Distance Education Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased funding for education and training programs in the Rural Women's Access Grants Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$78m for Aboriginal employment and training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400 additional child care places in rural and outer metropolitan areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43% of JOBSTART places in rural areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39% of JOBTRAIN places in rural areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved arrangements for TAFE facilities to teach higher education courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TAFE resource agreements to ensure closer co-operation between educational sectors in rural areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>