

## RURAL AND REMOTE

The Independent Education Union of Australia believes that the interrelationship and interplay of a community's health and well-being with its education, training and employment opportunities, and the construction of projects, small businesses and similar enterprises cannot be overestimated.

To this end, the IEU supports the establishment of an intergovernmental Taskforce comprising the range of key policy portfolios (e.g. industry development, regional development, transport, education and training, health, regional development, finance etc) which would be involved in developing integrated policies directed to rebuilding rural and remote communities, and in particular the provision of education and training within them. The role and structure of such a Taskforce needs to be embedded in the community and to have a knowledge and understanding of the community and its needs.

The IEU notes that Australia's rural communities need to have much of their infrastructure rebuilt and their services re established in order for the confidence and sense of community to be restored and for them to again have some sense of power over their lives.

The IEU strongly recommends better provision of specialist and crisis services for both schools and families in remote and rural areas.

The IEU supports and encourages strengthening cooperative alliances between clusters of TAFE Colleges, (both metropolitan and rural), schools (both government and non government) and universities whereby strong mutual education and training partnership arrangements can be developed.

The IEU supports an examination of models of educational provision and their necessary funding arrangements whereby school communities look at ways in which there can be a reorganisation of resource sharing and curriculum offerings across schools and systems. Public policy should

seek to strengthen the role of the school community as the locus of rebuilding the spirit and confidence of rural and regional Australia - around better libraries, sporting facilities, education and training facilities, and technology infrastructure.

The IEU supports examination of the establishment of local community education planning bodies which would involve school communities, parents, school staffs and other town agencies. These committees could look at the cooperative use of resources and access to services. At present, some schools are involved in trial programs of "full service schooling". Such a model could help facilitate an integrated approach to the efficient and effective use of community services such as transport, sporting facilities libraries and technology and as well, strengthen local communities.

The IEU urges an examination of the possibility of the funding and employing authorities developing teacher incentives to encourage employment in rural and remote schools for a sustained period of time to give continuity and predictability of staffing arrangements. Such schema should also have provisions for professional development, pre-service training, improved leave conditions and redeployment to other schools after an agreed period of service.

The IEU notes with disappointment the failure of government to provide to rural and remote communities equitable access to technology infrastructure which can assist these communities, and particularly their schools, to connect with each other and more broadly, in the same way that communities in urban centres can, is discriminatory and contributes to the growing sense of isolation and division felt by these communities. The IEU believes that there is the need to investigate the strategies employed by governments of other countries as to how they achieve national coverage of such equipment.

The IEUA supports the ongoing work of Rural Education Forum Australia and calls for ongoing funding of this

organisation by the federal  
government.