

15 March 2019

Ministry of Education

Mātauranga House

Wellington

Via email: early.learning@education.govt.nz

RURAL WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (INC) SUBMISSION
DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EARLY LEARNING 2019-29

Introduction

Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the draft Strategic Plan for Early Learning 2019-29.

RWNZ supports the recommendations of the Strategic Plan. However, we note that there is no mention of rural communities in the proposed changes. Families living in rural areas have less choice regarding, or lack access to, early childcare centres in comparison to their urban counterparts. RWNZ urges the Ministry of Education to adopt a rural lens when considering the recommendations of the Strategic Plan and ensure that rural children are afforded a robust start to their education.

Specific Comments

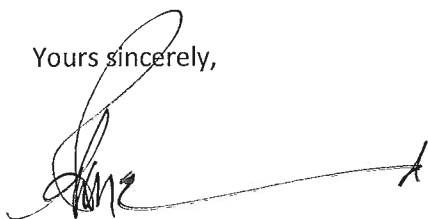
1. Additional funding and support should be given to rurally-based early childhood education providers to ensure flexibility for parents.
2. The lifetime of ECE licences should be limited to six years to ensure that the performance of early childhood teachers is adequately assessed in regular reviews.
3. In addition to gazetting Te Whāriki, RWNZ would like to see alternative frameworks for early learning, such as Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, made available to education providers in order to provide for children with specific learning needs.

4. Develop age appropriate learning opportunities relating to the rural sector, including incorporating farming and agricultural examples into the curriculum and an awareness of health and safety.
5. RWNZ supports the Strategy's recommendation to expand the number of wrap-around social services in early learning centres as geographical barriers limit access to support services for rural whānau.
6. The Ministry of Education's workforce supply strategy should expand the current scholarship programmes to incentivise people from rural areas to train as ECE providers.
7. The Strategic Plan should include requirements for professional learning and development (PLD) provision in the regions.
8. RWNZ would like to see that rurally-based teachers are compensated for any travel costs to national centres for PLD.

About Rural Women New Zealand

9. Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) is a not-for-profit, member-based organisation that reaches into all rural communities and has an authoritative voice on rural environment, health, education, technology, business and social issues.
10. RWNZ strives to ensure that all rural residents, workers and families have equitable access to services, inequalities are addressed by Government, and the wellbeing of rural communities is considered from the beginning of all policy and legislative development.
11. RWNZ is affiliated to the Associated Country Women of the World and as such upholds all United Nations, ILO and WHO conventions and outcome statements as they relate to women and rural women in particular.
12. RWNZ would like to draw particular attention to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, Quality Education, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, as well as the outcome statement of the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Yours sincerely,



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