

5 April 2019

Ministry of Education

Wellington

Email: [tomorrows.schools@education.govt.nz](mailto:tomorrows.schools@education.govt.nz)

## **RURAL WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (INC) SUBMISSION TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together | Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātitini.

RWNZ is a member of the Rural Education Reference Group (RERG) and supports the submission made by RERG on Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātitini. RWNZ recognises that the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce has made an effort to understand the unique challenges faced by rural schools and supports the Report's recommendations. However, RWNZ urges the Ministry of Education to include rural representation at all levels of the proposed structural changes, ensuring that Tomorrow's Schools Reform will provide rural children with a robust education.

### **Specific Comments**

1. As a member of the Rural Education Reference Group (RERG), RWNZ believes that there must be a cross-party consensus on any recommendations made in the Report to ensure continuity should a change of Government occur before the recommendations are fully implemented.
2. RWNZ supports the Government's proposed pathway for Kaupapa Māori learning and submits that New Zealand Sign Language be included in the curriculum to better represent Aotearoa's three official languages.

3. Developing adequate internet infrastructure for rural schools must be prioritised to ensure that rural students and teachers have access to online resources and digital technology.
4. RWNZ believes that representatives from the rural education sector should be included in Ministry of Education workforce planning to advocate for the needs of rural whānau.
5. The Ministry of Education's workforce supply policy should expand the current scholarship programmes to incentivise people from rural areas to train as teachers and promote voluntary bonding to retain skilled professionals in the rural workforce.
6. RWNZ would like to see concrete development experiences and pathways for rural teachers and principals to ensure they are provided with the same opportunities for career advancement as their urban counterparts.
7. Provide rurally-based principals with customised mentoring from experts experienced in the rural education sector to strengthen their professional development.
8. Include a Rural Advisor in each Education Hub to ensure that regions' rural populations are represented; this Advisor could support both new and experienced principals and teachers in rural schools.
9. Education Hubs must be geographically accessible to all rural schools to ensure that sole-charge principals who teach while also acting as school plumber, grounds keeper and nurse, are able to focus on their educational and leadership duties.
10. RWNZ would like to see structured collaboration between Education Hubs and health and social services, (for example Oranga Tamariki), bearing in mind that education does not occur in a vacuum and rural whānau often lack adequate access to such services.
11. RWNZ agrees with the statement on page 107 of the Report, "*Small schools can be disadvantaged in the way funding is allocated,*" and urges the Government to address this inequity.
12. The allocation of learning support resources for schools with disabled students should be dependent on need rather than school role size, especially in rural areas where students with high

learning needs may not have timely access to support services; this is an example of the type of assessment a Rural Advisor in the local Education Hub could facilitate.

13. Local industry knowledge should be incorporated into the curriculum to ensure that students are prepared to enter New Zealand's dynamic labour market, and to create a sense of belonging and wellbeing within the education system.

We wish to provide an oral submission and look forward to hearing of a suitable time.

### **About Rural Women New Zealand**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Yours sincerely,

Angela McLeod  
Acting Chief Executive  
**Rural Women New Zealand**  
PO Box 12-021, Wellington 6144  
P 04 473 5524  
E [angela.mcleod@ruralwomennz.nz](mailto:angela.mcleod@ruralwomennz.nz)  
W [www.ruralwomennz.nz](http://www.ruralwomennz.nz)

