

Minister for Education
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Deputy Leader in the Legislative Council

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02 SEP 2024

Mr Rob Fairs MP
Liberal Member for Bass
Email: C/o Clerk of Assembly: laura.ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Fairs

Rob

Thank you for your Constituent Question on 06 August 2024, asked as follows:

Remote and regional areas often face challenges when recruiting, and constituents in my electorate of Bass want to ensure our schools have the high-quality teachers they need. You have announced the pilot incentive package to attract teachers for hard-to-staff schools. This is welcome news, but in many instances the need is urgent. When can we expect to see this scheme deliver results? What other strategies does the government have in place to ensure regional schools are adequately staffed?

I am pleased to provide the following response:

Thank you for your question in Parliament on 06 August 2024 regarding the Department for Education, Children and Young People's (the Department's) staffing incentives for hard-to-staff and regional schools.

We know that there is a national shortage of teachers and Tasmania is not immune to this issue.

Our remote and regional areas can often face challenges when recruiting, which is why we already offer financial incentives for teachers who commit to working in isolated schools.

The new pilot incentive package that we announced on 19 July 2024, focusses on attracting teachers to hard to staff schools and includes two incentive payments for staff who commit to working at the identified school for a minimum of one year.

The proposed program offers a first payment of \$1000 to be paid six weeks into Term 1 and a second payment of \$2275 paid six weeks into Term 3, with a possible option to extend for up to a total period four years.

This model has been designed to take into account, but not compete with, existing incentives for isolated schools. These incentives are part of the existing Teachers Agreement and include a settling in payment of \$5,000, relocation expenses being paid, paid time to attend urgent personal business and more.

In accordance with State Service Industrial Agreements, negotiations are now occurring on the proposed pilot with the Australian Education Union, with the aim of having the new model in place for the beginning of the 2025 school year.

Once finalised and if approved by the Tasmanian Industrial Commission, the incentive program would begin in Term 1, 2025, for a period of 12 months.

Teaching within regional and remote areas can provide career progression and professional development through opportunities that are not always available at metropolitan schools.

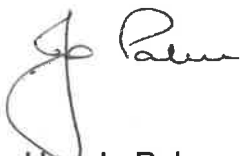
Through the Government's 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, we are also upgrading and building homes for teachers in rural and remote communities, as part of our \$188 million School Build Blitz investment.

As of 2024, some of our isolated schools (those on the West Coast of Tasmania) have a Lead Principal who provides additional leadership and support to Principals and their schools. The role of the Lead Principal is to work closely with each Principal and offer advice, support and guidance. These schools work together to use their resources in a way that is as flexible as possible to limit the disruption staffing shortages create within these areas.

In this difficult time of national teacher shortages, we are working very hard to promote career opportunities in our regional and remote schools.

Thank you for raising this important question.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Palmer', is written over a faint, larger signature that appears to be 'Jo Palmer'.

Hon Jo Palmer MLC
Minister for Education