

Schools Plus is a national charity that helps children facing disadvantage succeed at school. Our purpose is to close the education gap and ensure all young Australians reach their potential through access to a great education.



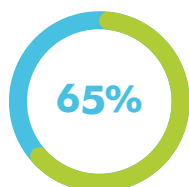
SUPPORTING RURAL AND REMOTE STUDENTS

The achievements of rural and remote (R&R) students have lagged behind urban students for decades

There is a persistent relationship between location and educational outcomes.

R&R contributes to schools' educational disadvantage in many ways. R&R schools tend to have a high teacher turnover, low retention rates, limited cultural facilities in the community, less confidence in the benefits of education, a lack of employment opportunities for school leavers, and a less relevant curriculum.

Remote students have less positive dispositions towards school on every measure (belonging, self-confidence, purpose and perseverance) than their regional and metropolitan peers.



Only 65% of R&R individuals are engaged in full-time work, training or study by the age of 24

Year 3 students in R&R locations are
7 MONTHS BEHIND
urban students in reading

The proportion of very remote students that meet educational milestones is
19-48 PERCENTAGE POINTS LOWER
than the general population

3X

Students in very remote areas are
THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY
to start school developmentally behind

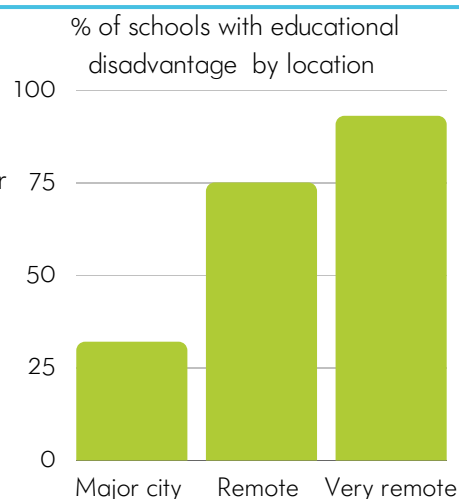


The impact of regionality

R&R locations have a higher proportion of schools with educational disadvantage.

Disadvantaged students, including R&R students, fall further behind each year they are at school.

Bright kids in disadvantaged schools show the biggest losses, making two-and-a-half years less progress than students with similar capabilities in more advantaged schools.



R&R and learning outcomes



R&R students are three times as likely

to be developmentally vulnerable



R&R students are less likely

to achieve at or above the national minimum standards for reading and numeracy



R&R students are less likely

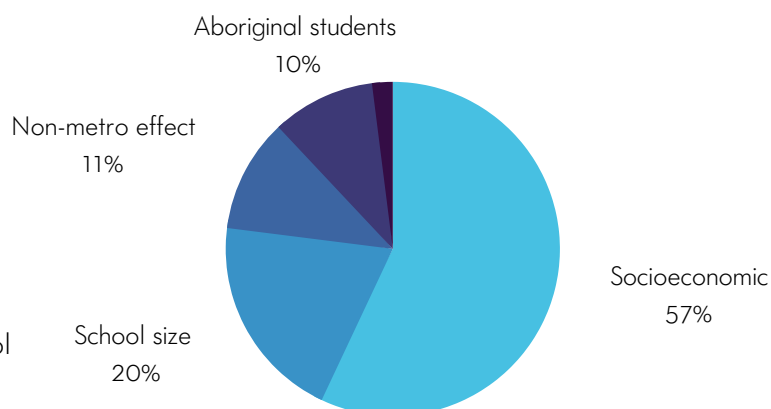
to finish school and be working towards a post-school qualification



What drives the performance gap in rural and remote schools?

There are several factors that have been shown to be correlated with lower levels of student attainment:

- **Socioeconomic status:** Parents and communities in R&R areas tend to be less educated and less likely to hold professional positions
- **School size:** R&R schools tend to be smaller with fewer resources, multi-grade classes, and less teacher retention
- **Non-metro effect:** differences in school culture and parental expectations in R&R areas



How Schools Plus helps schools to promote mental wellbeing

Access to high quality education is one of the most effective ways to ensure that students in R&R areas are prepared for their future outside of school.

Extensive research has shown that teachers have the most direct impact on student learning. A holistic approach, driven by a partnership between teachers and the community, and targeting both extracurricular and academic outcomes, can reduce education inequities.

Schools Plus works with schools in R&R areas to implement impactful and sustainable solutions that can bridge the gap between location and education outcomes by empowering schools with resources. Our strategic support helps with project design, implementation, and evaluation.



Projects supported by Schools Plus

LOXTON HIGH SCHOOL, SA



THE NEED: Recent droughts in the Riverland/Mallee region of South Australia, where Loxton High School is located, have resulted in lower job availability. Since the agriculture industry is a major employer in the area, staff at Loxton High School wanted to increase students' understanding of emerging AgriTech developments. A review of the school curriculum found that students required more industry-specific and tech-focused practical learning.

OUR SUPPORT: The teachers and students set-up a Farmbot and hydroponic system, and integrated this technology into curriculum areas, allowing students to monitor plant growth and learn about digital technology and sustainability. A greenhouse will also be established to facilitate the learning of horticultural techniques.

THE IMPACT: Student interest in robotics has increased extraordinarily, and the critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills of students has also increased. Students have a better understanding of farm technology, and have built skills that they can translate into the workforce. Although the program is still in its beginnings, it has had a major impact on the school community, and there is considerable room for further progress.

Agriculture teacher – “The opportunities for students are limitless”

GILLEN PRIMARY SCHOOL, NT

THE NEED: Gillen Primary School is located in a community that is concentrated by disadvantage. Low levels of parent education significantly contribute to students' lack of pre-reading skills, including vocabulary, oral language skills, and phonological awareness. Students arrive at Gillen Primary School with a vocabulary that is far behind what is expected for their age.

OUR SUPPORT: The School revamped its oral language program by adopting a consistent, intensive and evidence-based approach to early literacy and language acquisition, and developing language and literacy teams. The program trains school teachers in early language pedagogy, which allows them to identify at-risk students and target areas of need.

THE IMPACT: Assessment tools have shown that students are becoming more competent; Students are showing improved foundational early language and literacy skills.



Staff member - "We now have great capacity and tools to assess and respond to students in all areas of their language and literacy growth"