

Information Booklet

Participate in the 2011 *Explore Your Future* program

As a teacher education student, we are offering you a range of professional experiences through the *Explore Your Future* program. The program provides valuable experiences to assist you in making choices about your teaching future in NSW public schools. *Explore Your Future* provides experiences in both rural and metropolitan school locations where there is a higher demand for new teachers.

Rural and remote initiatives

- ***Beyond the Line – School Community Visits***
A week-long visit and hands-on introduction to country schools and their communities in a non-coastal rural or remote area in NSW.
- ***Beyond the Line – Professional Experience***
Financial and placement assistance to support a rewarding professional experience in country schools in Western NSW, the Riverina and New England regions.

“It showed me country schools are given lots of support, making it less scary for us new teachers...after this program I would definitely teach in the country.”

“It has always been my dream to teach in a remote community. This program reinforced that desire and allowed me to take one step further in reaching that dream.”

“The staff were encouraging, inspiring and most supportive. I was bombarded with invitations to show me their unique town and landscape.”

“It is a fantastic opportunity to develop not only as a teacher, but as a person. I learnt I am stronger and more capable of doing things than I gave myself credit for.”

Evaluation responses by *Beyond the Line* participants

Western and South Western Sydney initiatives

- ***Beyond the Bridge – School Community Visits***
Structured visits and introduction to schools in western and south western Sydney providing insight into these high demand employment areas.
- ***Beyond the Bridge – Professional Experience***
Assistance to explore the opportunities and benefits of teaching in western and south western Sydney through a professional experience placement.

“I wanted the opportunity to ... connect culturally with students from western Sydney. I found out a lot about myself and what I am capable of as a teacher. I learnt a lot about the support available in public schools and disadvantaged areas. The program helps future teachers see beyond stereotypes and assumptions and gain an understanding of just what kind of difference we can make as teachers.”

“This was the most challenging and rewarding prac I have ever done...I was placed in a school community that was concerned with making the best for every student and I learnt so many strategies which I will apply to future teaching situations. It ‘opened my eyes’ and brought me into contact with some amazing children and made me realise the important role of school and education in their lives.”

Evaluation responses by *Beyond the Bridge* participants

Test drive your teaching career in Public Education. Get started now!

Applying for an *Explore Your Future* initiative:

- Step 1:** Initially, you should check with your lecturer or professional experience coordinator to see which programs are available in your university.
- Step 2:** Applications for *School Community Visits* will usually be distributed via university email or in conjunction with an information session arranged by your university. These initiatives are funded by *Explore Your Future* and involve either one week (*Beyond the Line*) or one-two days travel (*Beyond the Bridge*). Ask your lecturer or professional experience office for selection criteria and details.
- Step 3:** To participate in a *Professional Experience* initiative please talk to the professional experience office at your university or college, request and complete an application form and forward it to your professional experience coordinator.
- Step 4:** Your professional experience coordinator will assess your application based on your commitment to teaching in public schools in rural or western and south western Sydney, your previous professional experience reports and academic record, and information from your application form.
- Step 5:** Identify the school, schools or the area in which you wish to undertake practice teaching.

In cases where agreed school placements are sourced and arranged directly by yourself or the university, an approved application should be submitted by your university to *Explore Your Future* at least five school weeks prior to placement. Where school placements are requested via *Explore Your Future*, an approved application form should be submitted at least eight school weeks prior to placement.

- Step 6:** Successful applicants will have their placement confirmed or sourced by *Explore Your Future*. The *Explore Your Future* coordinator will phone participants to discuss travel and accommodation options (*Beyond the Line*), and school availability when required (*Beyond the Line/Beyond the Bridge*).

The financial support provided to country *Professional Experience* participants is reimbursed at the completion of the placement. Limited travel assistance may be available in special circumstances to rural-based participants from regional universities on a Greater Western Sydney placement.

- Step 7:** Participants, the university and school will be advised of all *Professional Experience* placement arrangements as soon as they are confirmed.

Note: Applications are competitive as universities are allocated a limited number of places for the program. This program is only available to domestic students and permanent residents.

Explore Your Future Program Information

RURAL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS INITIATIVES

1) *Beyond the Line – School Community Visits*

As a teacher education student from the city or large regional centre, you can experience a hands-on visit to country schools in the Department of Education's Western NSW, Riverina or New England regions. Visits are based in and around the Bourke, Broken Hill, Deniliquin, Dubbo, Griffith, Inverell, Tamworth and Moree areas.

The benefits of participating in this initiative

- Broaden your knowledge of life as a teacher in rural NSW.
- See first-hand what rural life is like and hear honest appraisals about teaching in the country from the people you meet during your visit.
- Experience country hospitality for yourself and see the immense respect rural communities have for teachers and schools.
- Broaden your career options. Earlier opportunities for casual, temporary and permanent employment are available to graduates in country areas (and earlier opportunities for responsibility and promotion).
- See for yourself the exciting opportunities available for an enjoyable and satisfying teaching career in NSW public schools.
- Find out about the generous financial incentives and other extra benefits that teachers in country schools receive.

What will this initiative involve?

- A week-long visit to schools in the western areas of NSW.
- You will travel by bus to one or more locations and spend time in schools, with teachers, students and the school community.
- Accommodation may include billeting, hotels, motels or cabins in the local community.

Accommodation and Travel

- Whilst on your visit travel, accommodation, breakfast and dinner expenses will be paid for by *Explore Your Future*.
- You will have to pay for meals whilst travelling, lunches and any extra food or drink you may wish to purchase.

Selection Procedure

If your university is participating in this program, visit dates, details and selection procedures are available directly from your lecturer or professional experience coordinator.

2) **Beyond the Line - Professional Experience**

Explore Your Future will provide financial assistance if you are selected to do your professional experience placement in a NSW public school in a targeted rural or remote area. To be eligible to participate in the program, you cannot live in or near the town or area in which you undertake your professional experience.

The benefits of professional experience in rural or remote NSW

- Teaching in the country offers exceptional opportunities for beginning teachers. It is a rewarding lifestyle choice that gives you a tremendous opportunity to get involved in the wider community.
- Earlier opportunities for casual, temporary and permanent employment are available to graduates in country areas (and earlier opportunities for responsibility and promotion).
- You will be undertaking your professional experience in a school community committed to developing new teachers and with enthusiastic and supportive staff who are willing to share their professional expertise.
- You will be part of a school community which is happy to welcome you to life in a rural community.

Schools in which placements are available

This year opportunities for professional experience placements are available at selected schools in the Western NSW, Riverina and New England regions. The schools range from one teacher K-6 schools, to small primary schools with three to four teachers, central schools with primary and secondary departments, and high schools in larger centres such as Narrabri, Forbes, West Wyalong and Hay.

Applicants should identify the school, schools or the area in which you wish to undertake practice teaching.

In cases where school placements are sourced and arranged directly by yourself or the university, ensure your university confirms with *Explore Your Future* that the school is targeted in *Beyond the Line*. Approved application should be submitted by your university to *Explore Your Future* at least five school weeks prior to placement.

Where school placements are requested via *Explore Your Future*, an approved application form should be submitted at least eight school weeks prior to placement.

School selection should be informed by the requirements of the applicant's course and the facilities and support that the school offers to student teachers.

Accommodation and travel

If you are selected to participate in this initiative, *Explore your Future* will pay agreed accommodation and return travel costs to the country town in which your school is situated.

Subject to your completing the placement, up to a maximum \$500 (Primary/Secondary)/\$1,000 (Selected Secondary – Maths, Science, English and Primary/Secondary – Special Ed).

It is condition of the program that all expense claims are reasonable and agreed on prior to placement.

i) Accommodation

Arrangements for accommodation will be made by *Explore Your Future* in consultation with yourself and the nominated contact person at the school to which you are allocated unless agreed otherwise prior to placement. Accommodation alternatives may include billeting with teachers, share accommodation with teachers, rental accommodation, or staying in a local caravan park or hotel.

ii) Travel

Travel costs to and from the country town you are placed in will be reimbursed by *Explore Your Future* subject to the following:

- You will be responsible for making your own travel arrangements and initially covering the cost of this travel.
- All public transport expenses will be reimbursed by *Explore your Future*. Where students need to use private transport, travel expenses can only be reimbursed where:
 - approval to use private vehicles has been obtained from *Explore Your Future* prior to travel;
 - the vehicle is comprehensively insured and that insurance policy indemnifies the crown (a copy of the current renewal will need to be provided); and
 - approved private travel will be paid at the rate of:

1600 cc or less	25.2 cents per km.
1600 cc and over	29.6 cents per km.
- Travel costs are only paid for your initial trip to your placement area and return trip on completion, and do not include tolls or other expenses.
- Additional travel undertaken during the period of the professional experience placement will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- Once you have completed your placement, you will need to complete a claim form and submit it to *Explore Your Future*.

Please note: You should be aware that refund of travel expenses may have a Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) implication.

Where the NSW Department of Education and Training incurs FBT for benefits provided to its employees, the Commonwealth requires certain benefits to be disclosed on the individual employee's payment summary (formerly group certificate). This is known as a Reportable Fringe Benefit Amount (RFBA) and usually appears in a box in the top right-hand corner of the payment summary.

You will not have an income tax or FBT liability when you have an RFBA on your payment summary. However, the amount is used to access eligibility for other Commonwealth benefits and obligations, for example the Medicare levy.

You are advised to contact an accountant regarding FBT implications. For further information a fact sheet is available from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) which will provide the details on likely impacts and thresholds. FBT publications are available on the ATO website: www.ato.gov.au. There is also an FBT Tax Information Line on 13 33 28 and a fax service on 13 28 60.

WESTERN SYDNEY AND SOUTH WESTERN SYDNEY INITIATIVES

1) *Beyond the Bridge – School Community Visits*

These visits provide the opportunity for teacher education students to observe teaching and learning practices in schools in Sydney's west and south western areas. These locations are most likely to provide new graduates earlier opportunities for casual, temporary and permanent employment in the future.

The benefits of participating in this initiative

- Broaden your knowledge of life as a teacher in Sydney's west or south west.
- See first-hand what teaching in these dynamic schools is like.
- Broaden your career options. Earlier opportunities for casual, temporary and permanent employment are available to teacher graduates in these areas (and earlier opportunities for responsibility and promotion).
- See for yourself the exciting opportunities available for an enjoyable and satisfying teaching career in NSW public schools.

What will this initiative involve?

Metropolitan university students will visit a school or schools in Sydney's west or south-west observing teaching, talking with teachers and seeing for themselves the rewarding opportunities available.

Regional university students spend one or two days in Sydney's west or south western schools and the communities they serve. The visits form part of a structured program organised with your university to give you first-hand experience in the areas of earlier employment for new graduates.

Accommodation and Travel

For metropolitan Sydney students, bus travel or financial assistance to and from your university or pick-up point will be provided by *Explore Your Future*.

For regional participants in this initiative, *Explore Your Future* will pay your accommodation costs and return travel to your university. While accommodated in Sydney, your breakfast and dinners will also be provided, but meals while travelling and all lunches will be your responsibility.

2) *Beyond the Bridge – Professional Experience*

Explore Your Future will assist you to secure professional experience placements in public schools in Sydney's west and south west. These visits provide the opportunity for teacher education students to observe teaching and learning practices in schools in areas that are most likely to provide new graduates earlier opportunities for casual, temporary and permanent employment in the future.

The benefits of professional experience in western and south western Sydney

- Teaching in Sydney's metropolitan west and south west offers exceptional opportunities for beginning teachers. Schools are varied and dynamic, offering a number of unique programs developed and implemented for the communities they serve.

- These areas have traditionally provided more employment opportunities than other Sydney locations. Earlier opportunities for casual, temporary and permanent employment are available to teacher graduates in these areas (and earlier opportunities for responsibility and promotion).
- You will be undertaking your professional experience in a school community committed to developing young teachers and with enthusiastic and supportive staff who are willing to share their professional expertise.

Schools in which placements are available

This year opportunities for Beyond the Bridge professional experience placements are available in schools in the NSW Department of Education's Western Sydney and South Western Sydney regions. This includes selected schools in the Blue Mountains, Cumberland, Hawkesbury, Minchinbury, Mt Druitt, Nirimba, Penrith Valley and the Hills areas in the Western Sydney Region and the Bankstown, Campbelltown, East Hills, Fairfield, Granville, Hoxton, Ingleburn, Liverpool, Macarthur and Strathfield areas in the South West Sydney Region.

Accommodation and Travel

For metropolitan Sydney students, no financial assistance is provided.

For rural-based participants attending regional universities, limited travel assistance to and from university or home may be available in special circumstances for this initiative. Financial support provided to country *Professional Experience* participants is reimbursed at the completion of the placement.

Additional information

- Local and regional tourism websites – for local information and features.
- Finding a Public School (A-Z) at www.schools.nsw.edu.au – for information on your school placement, including school history and context, student numbers, school homepage etc.
- Teach.NSW (www.teach.nsw.edu.au) and Graduate Recruitment Program (www.teach.nsw.edu.au/grp) websites – for information on recruitment and employment issues, the benefits of teaching in rural and remote NSW or western and south western Sydney schools, teacher interviews etc.

For further information contact your designated university or college Beyond the Line coordinator, Professional Experience Office or visit the teach.NSW website.

TEACH – AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE