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## CATHOLIC SECTOR WELCOMES REPORT ON REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION

The National Catholic Education Commission welcomes the report of the Independent review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education undertaken by Dr John Halsey, Emeritus Professor, Flinders University.

The NCEC's acting executive director Ray Collins said the report took into account the views of key stakeholders including submissions from the Catholic sector.

"It is a thorough report which was informed by an extensive literature review and 340 submissions including the NCEC and other Catholic education authorities," said Mr Collins.

"Professor Halsey and his team also visited many regional rural and remote schools and education providers across the length and breadth of Australia and it is clear from the recommendations that the needs of these communities resonated with the team," he said.

"I was particularly impressed by the reports identification of the needs of RRR schools in relation to the provision of teachers in these schools, the quality of the learning experiences for students, the importance of experienced and creative leadership and the important links between schools and their communities."

Mr Collins said it was good to see that the difficulties young people face in accessing University and vocational education providers far from their homes was clearly addressed in the report.

"A significant feature of the report is the identification of initiatives that clearly address the issues raised, including the Diocese of Cairns' innovative approach to encouraging students from Brisbane to consider teaching in far North Queensland schools, and the Diocese of Wagga Wagga's weekly boarding program allowing students to return to their home communities each weekend, retaining their connections with families and their local communities," he said.

"The nine themes identified by Professor Halsey and his team ensure that the range of concerns for Regional, Rural and Remote communities are identified and, most importantly, a large number of recommendations and actions are put forward for governments and education authorities to consider," Mr Collins said.

Mr Collins commended the government for undertaking the independent review and said the "challenge is now for governments and education authorities to address the recommendations".