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# School of rural rock star teachers

## Only best for bush

**CHRISTOPHER HARRIS**  
EDUCATION WRITER

A TEAM of elite teachers has been selected to travel to rural outposts around the state as part of a new program aimed at lifting the results of regional schools.

Deputy Premier and Regional NSW Minister Paul Toole said the program which has been dubbed operation FASTstream would show young people the joys of living in the bush while accelerating their careers from being classroom teachers to leadership positions within a school.

Education Minister Sarah Mitchell last week told the successful applicants to prepare to become treated like minor celebrities in small towns like her hometown of Gunnedah where locals know and love their teachers.

"When you're a teacher in a local country school you become a bit of a rock star in the community, there is no anonymity and the kids will see you in the supermarket or down the street and be very excited — that's something I see with my own children when we see their teachers," she said.

She gave the successful group of 20 university graduates and 30 early career teachers her tips for living in the bush.

"These young people will be part of the community and everyone will be excited that they're there. I also encourage them to get involved in all the local activities in sport or art or culture or the community," she said.

A number of the successful applicants had young families and were excited to spend time



**Tom Smith is in the program.**

in the country — something Ms Mitchell said might convert even more city-slickers to the joys of country living.

"Once they get to experience the great lifestyle you can have, raising a family, buying a nice home and being part of the community, they're much more likely to stay in a rural community," she said.

Under the scheme, participants complete placements at a variety of school settings one of which must be regional or rural and are mentored along the way so they're ready to be a principal at the end of the 10 years.

Young beginning teacher Tom Smith, 23, who currently teaches Year 6 at Dural Public will pack his bags and head to Coffs Harbour next term to teach at Narranga Public School.

"Being able to have the opportunity to teach in a rural community was a really enticing opportunity," he said.

"I was excited when I got the placement in Coffs Harbour (because) I have never really lived near a beach before."

He was looking forward to further crafting his teaching skills and sharing his passions with new colleagues and students. "I am passionate about my sport, I have been able to lead some really productive sporting programs," he said.