|  |
| --- |
| **Rural and remote teaching podcast series** |

David Lassig – Dysart State High School

*David Lassig is a change of career teacher who started his working life as a Fitter and Turner. Today he is Head of Department for Technology and Vocational Education and Training at Dysart State High School. Fifteen years after becoming a teacher David remains committed to the profession and excited about the opportunities it offers.*

**Announcer:**

This is the Queensland Department of education podcast.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

Queensland state schools offer a variety of teaching experiences, including the opportunity to live and work in unique rural and remote destinations. Hi, I'm Virginia Bowdidge from the Queensland Department of Education, and in this podcast series, I talk to state school teachers living in unique corners of our vast state. Today David Lessig joins me. David is Head of Department for Technology and VET at Dysart State High School. Dysart is a small town, approximately two and a half hours inland from Mackay. Hi David, thanks for joining me.

**David Lassig:**

No worries, thank you, thanks for the call.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

Can you tell me a little bit about your career before teaching and why you decided to change careers and become a teacher?

**David Lassig:**

So, when I was at school, I actually wanted to become a teacher. I did not apply myself as best as I possibly could have and my TE score wasn't quite high enough to get into teaching, so I actually went and did a trade, I’m a Fitter and Turner by trade. I worked on that for probably 10 to 12 years and decided that I actually wanted to go back to teaching. So I went back to uni, did my degree and then became a teacher. I was working while I was studying at university as well. I ran a business in Brisbane, rather successfully, but, I was at the point I needed to, to change careers and follow my... what I wanted to do.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

And what was it about teaching that attracted you?

**David Lassig:**

I enjoy working with kids. When I left school — my mother was a teacher, my uncle was a teacher, well auntie, uncle and auntie were both teachers — and it really, I really want to impart knowledge, I suppose. That's probably what I wanted to do.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

And how long have you been teaching now?

**David Lassig:**

I've been teaching now since 2005.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

And how long have you been teaching in Dysart?

**David Lassig:** So, I've been teaching in Dysart since the start of last year. I was a teacher at Bundaberg State High School before this, looking for a promotion to become a head of department. Working in a large school on the coast, it wasn't going to happen. So, I looked at my options for a rural remote setting and there was a position out here and I've taken it on board and I absolutely love it.

Virginia Bowdidge: And what is your position out there?

**David Lassig:**

So, I'm Head of Department for Technology and VET at Dysart.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

Were the logistics of the move difficult to navigate?

**David Lassig:**

It was quite an easy thing to do in the end. I thought it was going to be quite difficult, but it was actually quite simple, so.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

What made it simple?

**David Lassig:**

The simplicity of the thing was, one, I was required out here and I was welcomed in by the community and it was just, easy.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

And is the school size much different to where you're from?

**David Lassig:**

Yes, it most definitely is. So, I came from, like I said, Bundaberg State High School with around about 1600 students and at here, currently at Dysart we have, I think it's 187 students. I do thrive on information, so I would say at Bundaberg State High School, I probably knew around about 70% of the students by name, but out here, I know them all by name.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

Does the department offer any financial incentives for remote teaching?

**David Lassig:**

They do. We have what they call a remote incentive scheme, you get a fortnightly payment plus you're entitled to what they call three RAIS days a year, Remote Area Incentive Scheme.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

And what is it about teaching remotely that has drawn you in?

**David Lassig:**

Realistically, the size of the school is a good thing. I do enjoy the small school now than the larger school. Plus the opportunities. If I was a head of department in a larger school, that'd be what I'll be doing. Whereas, out here I find I'm actually doing more deputy work than I am doing head of department work and it's the same with teachers. Teachers seem to be doing their teaching role, but they're also doing more stuff that a HOD would normally do as well. More opportunities and more experience.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

How does it differ to teaching in an urban or metropolitan setting?

**David Lassig:**

What I find, I think in an urban or metropolitan setting, you don't tend to associate with the teachers at school and parents as much as what you do out in a rural remote setting like this. Out here, the teachers are more of a family, so it's sort of, they band together and the parents are a lot more able to come up and have a chat. They're sort of... they're very personable and they will come and talk to you.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

Have you been happy with your decision to change to teaching?

**David Lassig:**

Yes, I am very happy with that change. I did enjoy what I was doing, don't get me wrong, but I find this much more rewarding.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

And have you been happy with your decision to go to Dysart?

**David Lassig:**

I'm very happy with my decision to come out to Dysart. The experience that I'm getting out here far outweighs anything I would get in a metropolitan setting.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

What have you found surprising about working in Dysart?

**David Lassig:**

Probably the community involvement, as I said, people will welcome you and they'll actually talk to you down the street, walking down the street and people will say hello to you. It's just feels more of a community than what it does in a metropolitan setting.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

Do you think you'll stay there for a while?

**David Lassig:**

I will be staying here for a few years. Yes.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

Can you describe a typical school day?

**David Lassig:**

A typical school day for me, I actually get in quite early. I come in and do a bit of paperwork, my HOD duty stuff like that. We have a rotation with the head of departments for doing the supervision for the absent teachers for the day so I come in, I do a bit of that. Most days I'm teaching so I do prep for lessons cause I teach manual arts, I've got to make sure that the materials and the workshops are ready. A lot of my day, I find I'm spending dealing with students, which I really enjoy. Not necessarily just all problems, but, chatting with them to find out how they're going, celebrating successes, trying to help them out of situations where they might not be in the happiest point, and I really do enjoy that. And then after school, quite often, we were involved with meetings, but they're all for the benefit of myself and the school and the students, so totally enjoy it.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

What do you wish you knew before becoming a remote teacher?

**David Lassig:**

Probably how good it is to be honest. Because before that I had a perception that a rural remote teacher you’re stuck out in the sticks, never get to see anything, never get to do anything. And I suppose, putting the perspective from a large school where kids don't really interact with you that much, where you come in here and there's more interaction. It would have been nice to know that from the start, but that's something I don't think you can tell anybody. I think you have to experience that for yourself.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

And would you recommend teaching as a profession?

**David Lassig:**

I would definitely recommend teaching as a profession. We do need more teachers and people who are excited and love the challenge of imparting knowledge and getting kids to learn things and seeing the joy that, when the kids are successful, it's amazing. So yes, I would promote it.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

What advice would you give students studying teaching or thinking of studying teaching?

**David Lassig:**

Advice I would give to anyone interested in becoming a teacher or in their study teaching now, I would say grab your rural remote chance, take it, grab it with both hands and get immersed in it. It's really of benefit to yourself in your career.

**Virginia Bowdidge:**

Thanks for your time, David.

**David Lassig:**

No worries. Thank you. I've had enjoyed doing this and I just hope we can inspire more teachers to join us out here in the bush.

**Announcer:**

You have been listening to the Queensland Department of Education podcast.