



# National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy

## Submission form

**Welcome to the submission process for the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy (the Strategy).**

The Regional Education Expert Advisory Group invites all interested parties to put forward ideas on the [framing paper](#) released on 20 December 2018.

The Advisory Group is seeking action-orientated responses to the challenges and key questions identified in this paper. The paper outlines the background of the strategy formation, the problem facing regional, rural and remote education and the challenges faced by those communities.

Your responses to the Framing Paper should focus on practical steps the Government could take to improve tertiary education access and attainment for people from regional, rural and remote backgrounds.

The form can be submitted any time before public submissions close at **5:00pm (AEDT) on 1 February 2019**.

Please note that the fields in the form are text only and pictures cannot be included. To return your completed form or if you experience difficulties in completing the form, please contact the Strategy Secretariat at [RegionalStrategy@education.gov.au](mailto:RegionalStrategy@education.gov.au).

### Note:

- information provided through the submission process may be published with your permission, including in the documentation relating to the Strategy and on the department's website
- questions marked with a \* require an answer to be provided.

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I agree to the Privacy Notice and Terms and Conditions of Submissions included at [Attachment A](#) to this document\*

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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*Note: If you do not accept the Privacy Notice and Conditions of Submissions please do not complete or submit this form.*

I agree to have my submission published.\*

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No <input type="checkbox"/>

## Your details

Title\*

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South Australia
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Would you like to receive updates about the Strategy's process? \*

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No <input type="checkbox"/>

## Submission details

I am making this submission as a: \*

Educator

Parent

Student / potential student

School

University

Training Provider

Employer

community organisation

government agency

peak body / Think Tank

academic person

Other

Are you submitting on behalf of an organisation (including a business, other body or agency)? \*

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please specify the organisation on whose behalf you are submitting

I confirm that I have the organisation's agreement to make this submission. \*

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
No <input type="checkbox"/>

*Note: If you do not have the organisation's agreement, please go to the previous question and select "No" to confirm you are not submitting on behalf of an organisation.*

## Key Questions from the Framing Paper

The Regional Education Expert Advisory Group is seeking responses to the following key questions. Specifically, we are looking for practical steps to overcome the five challenges facing students from RRR backgrounds.

### Challenge A: There are fewer study options available in RRR areas

1. What opportunities exist to expand options for further study in RRR areas?
2. What potential is there for universities, vocational training providers and other service providers to better work together in RRR areas, including opportunities to expand service offerings and better support articulation between VET and higher education?

### Challenge B: Relocating RRR students face significant financial, emotional and social challenges

3. What financial supports work best for students from RRR backgrounds, including those who choose to relocate?
4. What forms of support might be useful in helping students from RRR backgrounds to continue with their tertiary study?
5. How can universities assist RRR students to feel like they belong on their campus?

### Challenge C: Raising aspirations for tertiary education

6. What actions would help to raise aspirations and support informed career choices for students from RRR backgrounds?

### Challenge D: RRR often experience multiple forms of disadvantage

7. What practical steps can be taken to support RRR students who experience multiple forms of disadvantage?
8. How can we better support Indigenous people from RRR areas to access and succeed in tertiary education?

### Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas

9. How can tertiary education providers further stimulate economic growth in RRR areas?
10. What actions would further strengthen and increase the attractiveness of regional universities?
11. What policies would attract more metropolitan and international students to study at RRR areas, including regional universities and campuses?

### Challenge F: Implementing and monitoring a national strategy

12. Would there be value in establishing a National Regional Education Commissioner to oversee the Strategy and, if so, what should their role be?
13. How should success be measured? What goals and targets, including for tertiary education attainment, should be considered both at a national and individual community level?

## Please use the space provided below to respond to the questions above

The table cell will expand to accommodate your response. Please limit your response to 3000 words.

I am unclear why responses need to be limited to **only 3000 words**. The issues facing RRR education require extensive and ongoing discussion, certainly worthy of more than 3000 words. That said, my short response follows, and I look forward to ongoing meaningful interaction about this topic with those looking to improve RRR education.

I am also concerned that I am requested to “focus on practical steps the Government could take to improve tertiary education access and attainment for people from regional, rural and remote backgrounds”. For without the suite of educational options being improved (pre-school, primary school, middle school, secondary school) students in RRR contexts will continue to fall short of the ATARs required to access their preferred tertiary education pathway. I encourage a deep look at schooling in RRR spaces – particularly educational leadership in RRR spaces.

I recommend the government invest in researchers who can conduct research into the state of RRR tertiary education and education more broadly in order to reverse the trend where rural high school students are less likely to graduate and attend university (Alston & Kent, 2006; James, 2001; Marks, Fleming, Long, & McMillan, 2000).

### **Challenge A: There are fewer study options available in RRR areas**

14. What opportunities exist to expand options for further study in RRR areas?

Opportunity:

Investment in IT in RRR spaces. This will facilitate the delivery of on-line tertiary education being delivered to RRR students in their homes / home towns. This means we simultaneously address issues surrounding the drift of young people to the capital cities. We need young people to remain in our RRR towns for (at the very least) economic and social reasons.

Opportunity:

Support tertiary institutions to invest in RRR spaces so tertiary institutions have a presence in RRR spaces (a shop front if you will). These tertiary institutions' shop fronts can be the place that facilitates delivery of blended online / in-person courses in the RRR towns. We need the RRR towns to at least have a shop front so when people pass by they are reminded that people in the RRR space can engage in tertiary education, while living RRR. We also need tertiary institutions to have shop fronts in the RRR towns so there is a place for the RRR tertiary student to go when they need to access information to support them enrol and engage in tertiary education – including computer suites / printing / tutors.

Opportunity:

We need housing options and public transport in RRR towns to encourage students in the RRR space to shift to and live in the local RRR town, rather than shift to and live in a capital city. Accommodation in the RRR space is often cheaper than the capital city. This may also encourage the international students to shift to the RRR tertiary experience. This would shift the funds that international students spend to the RRR spaces.

Opportunity:

Encourage universities (through federal funding) to have a campus space in the RRR towns where the courses the university offer in the RRR towns connects with the local industries. E.g. in Port Lincoln, Flinders Uni had a campus that delivered courses related to the seafood industry. This is a natural connection. This no longer exists. But in Port Lincoln and across the 80,000kms<sup>2</sup> that is the Eyre Peninsula, students could connect with a Port Lincoln campus for their science degrees – instead of the family investing tens of thousands of dollars each year for their child to shift to and live in Adelaide.

There are other examples in SA I could offer: Port Augusta and the solar powered tomato farm. A uni could offer a course in Port Augusta, working with governments, the local industry, local schools, employment agencies to increase the growth of food, using re-newable energy sources (Port Augusta has a LOT of sun) with research into how to improve the food growing systems – and improving employment in a town with the highest rate of suicide amongst indigenous young men.

Opporutnity

The federal government can administer grants whereby the winners of the grants are those applications where there are multiple players applying for the grants. Where there are true, deep and functioning partnerships.

15. What potential is there for universities, vocational training providers and other service providers to better work together in RRR areas, including opportunities to expand service offerings and better support articulation between VET and higher education?

Opportunity:

- Share facilities – RTOs (unis / TAFE / RTOs) can joint invest in and jointly use facilities (land, lecture rooms, tutorial rooms, IT systems, insurance etc)

- Ensure tertiary education facilities do not compete for the same funding. Make funding more easily accessible for RRR towns where the sectors (RTO / VET / Unis – and schools) submit applications for funding to which they have all contributed, all invest in and all benefit from
- Show more clearly how students can follow pathways from their VET qualification to university courses. i.e. if i have a Diploma in “X”, then I can get RPL for subjects within a Bachelor of “Y”.
- Invest in local people who already live in the RRR spaces and have the experience and qualifications required to manage, run and expand services that the tertiary sector can offer tertiary students in the RRR sector. Employ people who live in the RRR sector in a RRR tertiary sector. You will be surprised how many people with Doctorates and extensive experience (employment, research etc) currently live in the RRR spaces. We tend to remain incognito because intellect is often not valued by those in the RRR spaces where RRR people typically value those with hands on knowledge who can ‘fix everything with a piece of wire’. People in RRR spaces also value people they know who were in the 1978 premiership team for netball / football. There is an opportunity to value those in the RRR space with intellect, intelligence, tertiary education, research experience etc.

#### **Challenge B: Relocating RRR students face significant financial, emotional and social challenges**

16. What financial supports work best for students from RRR backgrounds, including those who choose to relocate?

- Allow RRR students access to centrelink that is not linked to the value of family businesses. Families cannot take their (farm) dirt or (industry) machinery or (fishing) licenses to pay rent in the cities for their children who move to attend university. The wealth is tied up. The tied up wealth allows families to earn income. It is not wealth that can be converted to cash to pay \$10,000s of dollars each year for the children to be accommodated in the city.
- Moving allowance is important. 17 year olds who move from their RRR home need to purchase everything. Forks, sugar, kettle etc. There is no choice in the matter.
- Give the financial assistance to the student, not the parents.
- Funding for RRR students to return home is important in the settling in process. Families spend \$1000s of dollars in the first few years the young people move to the city for university. It is this staying in touch with family that ultimately keeps the young people enrolled in their degree. In a sense, think “managing the diaspora”.

17. What forms of support might be useful in helping students from RRR backgrounds to continue with their tertiary study?

- Ensure RRR students who moved to the capital city to enrol, can continue to access their tertiary course of preference, using IT, when they move back to their family home. Many RRR students do not and cannot live away from home. It is difficult emotionally and financially. They go to the city, then shortly after, return home. There is an opportunity

to allow students who tried city living to continue their learning through IT when they move back to the RRR family home.

- Have universities manage online groups where the RRR students can connect with other RRR students through a weekly (perhaps skype) session. It is lonely studying in the RRR spaces where other people are not engaging in uni education.
- Fund RRR students to travel back and forth between their RRR family home and the city. Currently, universities fund urban students to travel to RRR spaces to experience RRR placements. In a similar way, fund RRR students to travel to the city for urban placements.
- Unis need to offer extensive telephone support for the RRR student so the student new to the uni can talk to a real person in order to manage their enrolment. Websites are huge, daunting, take you round in circles and students new to uni find it very difficult to navigate. There is an opportunity for unis to reach out and contact the RRR students.
- Unis investing in mental health staff is very important. Waiting times for assistance can be too long. We need mental health staff with skills and knowledge in what it is like to be a RRR student. For it is incredibly isolating and lonely. And often these students are in the RRR space, surrounded by friends, family and employers who do not understand or value the uni experience. These RRR students are key to the future development of the RRR space ... we need to put in place systems to support them.

18. How can universities assist RRR students to feel like they belong on their campus?

- Mentoring programs. Pay RRR students who have been able to make the transition (living away from home and studying) to share their strategies with RRR students new to the capital cities and life of a tertiary student.
- Acknowledge and value the 'virtual' campus. The RRR students working from their RRR home are on the virtual campus. An imagined space if you will. Put in place systems that support them to feel they belong to this virtual / imagined uni campus.
- The best way to address many of these issues is to ask the RRR students what they would like. What would support them? There is an opportunity to employ people who have the job of connecting with RRR students to ask them what it is they need to support them to engage in and stay engaged with tertiary education.

### **Challenge C: Raising aspirations for tertiary education**

19. What actions would help to raise aspirations and support informed career choices for students from RRR backgrounds?

- We need highly educated people in the RRR space to be supported to be visible in the RRR towns in an attempt to dispel myths that we are 'weird'
- E.g. fund RRR academics / researchers to hold academic conferences. I will be trying to organise one for Port Lincoln.
- We need researchers to deliver community talks and be accessible to the 'normal' RRR person to show RRR communities that there are links between tertiary education, highly educated people and the needs of the RRR community (business / industry). We need funding to pay for academics to attend the RRR space and give public talks / be

available to the public to show the links between the RRR industries, research and the future of the RRR industries

- We need role models in the RRR space who are keen and interested in tertiary study
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#### **Challenge D: RRR often experience multiple forms of disadvantage**

20. What practical steps can be taken to support RRR students who experience multiple forms of disadvantage?

- RRR students need funding – in many cases, repeated, regular travel between the place the RRR student lives to access tertiary education and their family home empowers the RRR student to maintain the Diaspora and remain connected with their studies while feeling they are still connected with home. This is expensive for families. But means the student succeeds in their study and completes their degree/s.
- We need teachers and principals trained in their work. We need a minimum qualification for school principals (e.g. Master of Education – Leadership, management and business administration). The job of a principal is different from that of a teacher. We need teachers trained in the subjects they teach. Not teachers who are in the RRR space being asked to teach whatever is going that year (my experience). Staffing in RRR spaces of schools means RRR students cannot get the education they need to compete for places in tertiary education.

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21. How can we better support Indigenous people from RRR areas to access and succeed in tertiary education?

- I feel Indigenous people are better placed to answer this question. See my youtube lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMxoydRJ7vs>

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#### **Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas**

22. How can tertiary education providers further stimulate economic growth in RRR areas?

- RRR communities require a presence from the tertiary sector in the regional towns. Inclusive of staff. Well paid staff who inject new money (from outside the RRR community) into the RRR community. Staff who are highly educated (Doctorate) who can act as role models – i.e. the RRR community has uni staff in their community. This dispels myths about what uni staff / academics are like. The staff member also becomes part of the community often taking leadership roles in the community (e.g. President of a sports club). These people also offer an alternate voice to that which has become the predominant voice in the community and counters the status quo (racist, sexist, ageist views) that can predominate in RRR communities.
- Opportunity
- Tertiary sectors applying for funding to engage in research work in the RRR spaces where the local RRR schools, business, industries submit joint funding applications. With

the view to using research to improve local business and industry.

23. What actions would further strengthen and increase the attractiveness of regional universities?

- Fund the RRR tertiary sector in ways that force the tertiary sector to work with the industries that are already in the RRR community.
- Case Study: Whyalla,
- I recommend the creation of a funding stream in such a way that the RTOs must submit a joint application, wherein the TAFE and Unis work with the local industries (e.g. Mr. Gupta and the Whyalla Steelworks). This can facilitate sectors working together (uni, TAFE, industry, federal state and local governments, employment agencies, schools) to improve the ways in which the manufacture of steel occurs. So the process becomes more sustainable, environmentally appropriate, economically viable etc. This also brings improvements to social and community health and wellbeing and employment. Residents will be able to aspire to learning and working, knowing they can stay in the town / region and learn and work at the highest levels (Doctoral research and become Uni staff) but also at the lowest levels (forklift driver)- where all are equal cogs in the machine that is the regional town of Whyalla.
- Where unis operate in the RRR spaces, with adequate public transport, regional, interstate, international students can live and learn, bringing new money to the RRR spaces, where accommodation is often cheaper than urban settings.
- Regional unis who operate in connection with the RRR spaces through sport and arts, where uni students interact with local RRR community strengthen ties between the uni and local community.

24. What policies would attract more metropolitan and international students to study at RRR areas, including regional universities and campuses?

- Policy that supports investment in access to accommodation that is cheaper in the RRR space may attract metropolitan, interstate and international students. But an investment in public transport in the RRR towns is required so students can catch a bus to uni. (Think Port Lincoln South Australia – we need a public transport option).
- There does need to be organisations as part of the town / uni that support international students. This is because many regional towns in South Australia are anglo-European dominant. People from Asia, the middle east, Africa, the sub-continent stand out as different. In RRR towns that are not used to people from different races it can be very difficult for the township and the international students to intersect. We do not want more international students committing suicide due to a lack of welcome in Australia. We need to employ people in regional unis who have the job to help ‘outsiders’ link with the local RRR community. Think community development officers.
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#### **Challenge F: Implementing and monitoring a national strategy**

25. Would there be value in establishing a National Regional Education Commissioner to oversee the Strategy and, if so, what should their role be?

- No. Please do not do this. We have a federal and state ministers responsible for education. We have enough structures in place. However, there does need to be a focus on RRR education. The RRR space:
  - Provides water and food security
  - Protects bio-diversity (flora and fauna)
  - Has people and support services for business and industry - agricultural, aquacultural, mining, defence
  - Offers border protection (if you think this is a problem – i do not but concede many do)
  - Has people who work to mitigate natural disasters (fires / floods / dust storms)
  - Generates enormous income for Australia (through international sales of goods and also through paying taxes)
- So we should support the RRR space. For people in the RRR space support the nation.

26. How should success be measured? What goals and targets, including for tertiary education attainment, should be considered both at a national and individual community level?

- National level:
  - TARGET the ABS rates of education of people in RRR and capital cities be comparable.
  - GOAL: There needs to be the same percentage of RRR people with a Doctorate / Masters / Honours / Grad.Dip / Bachelor as the city.
- GOAL: the same percentage of students from RRR attend tertiary education as those from the capital cities
- GOAL: the same percentage of people with doctorates employed in RRR spaces as those with doctorates in urban spaces

My doctoral research remains committed to the RRR space.

Kathryn Hardwick-Franco

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## Please provide a short summary of the key points in your submission

Please limit your response to 300 words— **note:** any text above 300 words will be excluded from your submission. The table cell will expand to accommodate your response.

- Create funding applications where there must be a joint application from tertiary institutions, RRR business, RRR industry, RRR schools, RRR RTOs, whereby the tertiary institution can access funding to set up or further develop their RRR presence. The joint applicants must contribute half of the funding (perhaps in cash at least 25%, perhaps in kind maximum 25%). There must be clear goals. Project work must involve the uni having a RRR presence, where the work is related to RRR activity with the view to improving the RRR industry / business.
- Fund the RRR students who move to the urban based university. It is expensive for families to continue to invest \$10,000s of dollars every year for the university education of their children (accommodation, utilities, IT, books, transport, travel back and forth between uni and the RRR home). RRR families do not have access to high paying jobs to the same degree as urban parents, so the costs become a large percentage of the RRR family income. RRR students do not have access to social capital in the urban space to win part-time jobs. Centrelink help with the cost of moving is fantastic. Centrelink help linked to family wealth is prohibitive. Families cannot sell their dirt to pay for the uni education of their children.
- Have uni shopfronts in RRR spaces where the profile of tertiary education is obvious, where unis employ RRR people who have their doctorates to dispel myths about academics / scholarly work / research / universities being 'weird' or 'useless'.
- We need academics / scholars / researchers / university staff living and working in the RRR space, to be role models for RRR people so they see uni staff / students day-to-day thereby inspiring RRR people to aspire to engage in tertiary education.

# Privacy Notice and Terms and Conditions for Submissions

## Purpose for collection of information relating to submissions, and the use and disclosure of that information

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training (the department) invites you to make a submission in relation to the development of the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy (the Strategy).

Through the submission process, the department will be collecting certain information, including personal information. The information collected may include your name, your email address, the organisation you represent (if applicable) and any other information that is included in your submission.

The department may use and disclose this information for the purposes of informing or contributing to the Strategy, policy development related to the subject of the Strategy, publishing submissions (including by making submissions publicly available), and providing feedback to the department's Minister about the Strategy and submission process.

The department may also contact you to provide updates on the progress of the Strategy, if you have indicated in your submission response that you would like to receive such updates.

## Publishing submissions

The department reserves the right to publish any submissions, including only a sample of submissions, made in relation to the Strategy. This includes by making those submissions publicly available on the department's website, or through any report/s arising from the Strategy.

You may elect **not** to have your submission published. If you do not want to have your submission published, **do not check** the relevant box on this document.

Before publication, your email address, if provided with your submission, will be removed. **However, your name will be published with your submission.**

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The department reserves the right to amend or redact prior to publication, or to not publish, any submission if it considers the submission to be defamatory or derogatory in any way, or if it includes information relating to individuals.

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If you are making a submission on behalf of an organisation, or represent that you are, you must ensure that you have that organisation's agreement prior to making the submission. By making a submission, you represent to the department that you have such agreement.

If there is information in your submission referencing an individual, which is not otherwise publicly available, you must ensure that you have the consent of the individual to whom the information relates to include it in the submission. By making a submission, you represent to the department that you have such consent.

By making a submission, you further represent to the department that your submission does not contain any confidential information about any individual or organisation.

## **Privacy policy and contact**

For further information about the department's privacy policy and how it deals with information, including how you can access or correct your personal information, please see the department's [privacy policy](#).

For any queries relating to this Privacy Notice and Terms and Conditions for Submissions, the Strategy or your submission please contact the Regional Education Strategy Taskforce via email on: [RegionalStrategy@education.gov.au](mailto:RegionalStrategy@education.gov.au)