



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.

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.

Privacy agreement

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

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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*

Ms

First name*

Adrienne

Last name*

Nieuwenhuis

E-mail address*

[REDACTED]

State/Territory*

South Australia

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/carer/guardian

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

No

Please specify the organisation on whose behalf you are submitting

University of South Australia

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

Yes

No

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.

The University of South Australia (UniSA), through its Act of Establishment which sets out the functions of the university to provide tertiary education opportunities to groups within the community who have suffered disadvantages in education, has over many years proactively supported access to and participation in higher education for RRR students. We do this through our regional campuses, through our network of regional study hubs, through our study facility within the APY Lands, through our enabling, pathway and outreach programs, our scholarships and most recently through the development of our online programs. We do this in a state where the population distribution is very skewed towards the state capital and two significant regional centres, resulting in educational provision into very thin markets. We would therefore suggest that terms of reference for the Expert Advisory Group need to be expanded to focus not only on “supporting the performance of regional universities and vocational education providers” but also universities that deliver in regional, rural and remote areas.

With regard to the key questions from the discussion paper, we provide the following comments:

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

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

The role of pathway and enabling programs: We recommend expanding the delivery of enabling and sub-bachelor pathways through funded places for RRR students to build students’ academic and digital literacy skills through face to face local delivery before students progress to bachelor level study whether that is locally delivered, online or at a metropolitan-based campus.

The role of enabling education needs greater attention. The *Problem* section of the discussion paper focuses on a clear bifurcation of University and VET attainment in regional and remote areas, but it is not just VET which provides a bridging into employment and tertiary education; enabling programs provide a dedicated contribution to local communities and supportive pathways to tertiary studies. As noted in the 2016 NCSEHE Pathways to Higher Education report¹ HE retention rates were generally better for regional and remote students who entered via enabling pathway programs in comparison to those who entered via VET or OUA pathways.

UniSA’s Aboriginal Pathway Program is available in Adelaide, Mount Gambier, Whyalla, Ceduna, Port Lincoln and now into the APY Lands. UniSA College’s Diploma and Foundations studies are also available in regional campuses and links to UniSA’s suite of online programs which provide excellent pathways for regional, rural and remote students who wish to remain in their region but equally also provide pathways to range of study options at our city campuses.

¹ Pitman, T. and Trinidad, S. 2016 Pathways to Higher Education: The efficacy of enabling and sub-bachelor pathways for disadvantaged students NCSEHE report

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

Targeted support for local collaborations: While UniSA has strong relationships with TAFE SA that support regional delivery and RRR students, there is always scope for improvement. System issues such as state oversight and funding of VET versus federal oversight and funding of higher education can create tension rather than cooperation across the tertiary system. That said, targeted support for locally driven responses to specific needs can lead to significant outcomes. For example, UniSA College's partnership and co-working relationship established with TAFE SA to support education provision on the APY Lands. A joint 'road show' was held late in 2018 and further joint promotions are planned for 2019. A model of co-working locally is planned for the year ahead with TAFE SA community educators supporting students undertaking UniSA's Aboriginal Pathway Program. This working partnership will enable students to move seamlessly between TAFE and university programs with local face to face support. The advantage for both students and the local communities is that students do not need to leave familial and community supports whilst studying and the community does not lose future leaders as they develop their skills and knowledge.

Significant opportunities also exist in Whyalla, in the establishment of a new secondary school adjacent to both UniSA and TAFE SA campuses. As UniSA and TAFE SA develop closer alignment with industry and their workforce needs this presents an opportunity for integration of common faculties across TAFE and the university to create seamless learning paths for RRR students with multiple entry and exit points and increase opportunities for more RRR students (and staff) to study locally and work locally. The role of government in ensuring we maximise this opportunity is critical.

Supporting providers: One of the challenges for providers operating in thin markets, are the additional costs posed by rural, regional and especially remote, delivery. Collaborative arrangements and a network of regional hubs is one way of managing costs however consideration needs to be given to supporting both students and university/VET providers with additional funding for travel and equipment. While online learning is a positive option, educationally disadvantaged students will likely still need some enabling support and face to face, pastoral care options to fully engage with their tertiary studies. Not all regional and remote areas have adequate access to reliable technologies to make distance or online learning possible. Enabling pathways can help to build students' academic and digital literacy skills in a relatively 'low cost' learning environment, thereby providing students with the skills and confidence building they need to move into a fully online learning environment.

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.*

Flexible scholarships: From our experience scholarship schemes remain the most effective financial support. However, these schemes need to be more flexibly developed so that students can adapt the use of the funding for the purposes most important to them such as child care costs or fuel costs to travel to study centres or to support relocation.

The current 'gap year' model alone does not provide adequate support for RRR students relocating to University in metropolitan as it relies on work being available for RRR people in country areas. This is a barrier to RRR people attending University. All RRR students should have access to accommodation and living allowances to support to attend University. This

should be funded according to distance the family home is from the metropolitan or regional university as a separate arrangement to the independent youth allowance model (gap year). For example, people from Ceduna in the far west or Penola in the south east should be able to access greater levels of funding support than a person from the Barossa Valley or Victor Harbor.

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

Residential Hall Accommodation connections program. For students who need to relocate, the independent review into RRR, Halsey raises concern that in addition to the economic cost of relocation for study, there is a hidden social cost for many students. Students are removed from support networks, family, friends and their intrinsic sense of belonging when moving to university. In addition, the Urbis Regional Student Accommodation Assessment² highlights that regional students who move to cities are often not residing in Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), which is specifically developed to provide wellbeing and support networks to students, due to the large financial cost associated. Instead, they are more likely to live in share houses and independent accommodation away from the university support services in order to limit their financial burden, placing themselves at greater risk of (Urbis, 2018). Supporting students from regional areas to live in PBSA will help maximise the student's chance at success. RRR students should be provided with support that encourages them to live on-campus or in PBSA for the first year of study if they move away from home.

Local industry connections: For students who wish to remain in their local region, internships with local industry and other incentives for students to sustain their motivation and recognition of the advantages of studying locally.

5. *How can universities assist RRR students to feel like they belong on campus?*

Review of regional loading to ensure comparable student support staffing to metropolitan campuses. When operating campuses in small regional centres, it is difficult to maintain the same wellbeing and academic support staff or facilities as their metropolitan counterparts due to reduced student numbers. Reviewing regional loading funding to ensure equal support staff are available in smaller regional and satellite campuses and that all students receive comparable support to their metropolitan counterparts would be welcome.

Cocreation and breaking down barriers: Because many students at regional campuses are first-in family and are more likely to have not been in an academic environment before, they are susceptible to groupthink around norms of university life. Extra effort is needed at regional institutions to create an academic culture and norms around the purpose of the university. Dedicated communications; local counselling support; peer mentors from the region/remote area; whole of family engagement in university events locally as a means to break down the barriers and 'apparent elitism' of universities. Also investing in student leadership training locally and enabling local student leaders to attend national university conferences and events. Exposure to the culture of other universities is imperative to ensure effective academic role models.

Challenge C: Raising Aspirations for tertiary education

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

² https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/regional_student_accommodation_analysis_report_final.pdf

Create state-wide/nationwide RRR high school career advisor’s training. Creating specific training for RRR high school careers advisors that enhances their understanding of the challenges, opportunities and pathways for RRR students. We would challenge the notion that students are not aspirational – students are aspirational in their career end-points but lack the knowledge in how to get there. For example, through working with local year 10 students, UniSA found that many students had grand aspirations for careers that require higher education. One student wanted to be a graphic designer and had aspiration for the profession but lacked the confidence and understanding of the tertiary education pathway to achieve that goal. In this scenario, the support of a well-informed careers advisor could ensure the aspirations of these students are not lost through a lack of understanding of the higher education system. Aspiration exists, just not the means. One way to achieve this, in addition to university-based outreach activities, is to increase the skills of high school careers advising for RRR students.

Increasing formalised structured Industry-University internships for school leavers. As discussed above, linking students to local industries more consistently, reinforces students’ decisions to remain in their region. Support from government for local industries and universities to formulate arrangements for local students would expand their effectiveness. Funding for packaging structured university experiences that utilise a combination of part-time employment and industry mentors, in addition to studying, creates a tangible pathway for regional students to transition from school through formal training and then a career. This would enable RRR students to see a finite timeframe and end goal for their degree and help develop regional workforces and retention of professional level skills.

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.*

Additional funding Support for students and providers: We would like to emphasise that such forms of disadvantage have a compounding effect for students. Whilst socio-economic disadvantage is a critical factor the intersectional nature of compounding disadvantages creates complex challenges, for example, Aboriginal students in remote areas and women in sole parent households in rural, regional or remote locations. Psycho-social support which builds confidence and self-esteem is very important to those for whom there are few role models for study and where compounding factors have prevented solid educational foundations. We would therefore recommend that additional funding be targeted to students who meet multiple equity categories with concomitant additional pastoral and mentoring support provided.

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

Provision of well developed, community-based enabling and pathway programs: UniSA’s Aboriginal Pathway Program provides comprehensive and local place-based supports for students and works closely with local Aboriginal communities and family groups to provide for a holistic engagement. ATP and Away from Base funding are critical to students’ success and need to be as flexible and student-centred as possible. There are significant costs associated with supporting RRR students to study in their own communities and some of the current funding models cannot be used for this purpose, e.g. away from base funding can only be used when the student leaves their community to study.

Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas

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

Supporting local skills and workforce needs: As discussed above, education and training providers role is to support local skills and workforce needs, through internships, industry-

based projects and placements and other activities that directly link student outcomes with local needs.

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?*

Better funding for regional placements: While there are well funded health placement opportunities for metropolitan health students to access regional placements more funding should be allocated to support placements across other fields of study. For example, funding to support accommodation and travel for pre-service teachers from the metro to conduct placements in rural schools, and social workers and psychologists in human service organisations. There are critical shortages of these types of professionals in RRR areas, and in the field of social work for example work there is no funding to support regional student placements.

Offer a traditional university experience at a lower cost. UNE is an example of a more traditional university in a regional setting. Their residential colleges and campus style help create an atmosphere that is appealing. Metropolitan students may wish to move for this type of university experience, but much like regional students they struggle to afford it. There is scope to create regional university experiences that might attract metropolitan based students out to regional centres, particularly if linked with, scholarships and potential employment outcomes in the region.

In suggesting these, evaluation of past schemes such as the bonded medial places should be reviewed to inform potential strategies for greater mobility between metropolitan and regional locations.

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?*

Without clarity around the nature of the strategy and its implementation framework, it is difficult to comment on the necessity of establishing a National Regional Education Commissioner. However, our current view is that a well-developed strategy can be implemented within current state and federal structures and that a further layer of oversight is unnecessary.

We would also suggest that the Panel composition be reviewed to fully incorporate State based and remote interests. The current panel membership is skewed toward Queensland and the east coast and some of the greatest areas of regional and remote disadvantage are in other states and territories.

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?*

In addition to outcomes targets around success of students in either VET or higher education, we would suggest evaluation and measures be developed that consider how student aspiration is built, supported and realised.

We would also suggest a level of performance funding that acknowledges success and supports ongoing development of programs that support RRR student participation and success.

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.

See above.

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.**

Note, any information about individuals contained in your submission will be published. Note also that the name and address of any organisation you represent, if included in your submission, will also be published.

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.

The department also reserves the right to modify or adapt submissions for the purposes of web accessibility and any publishing formatting requirements.

For more information, please also visit the department's [Copyright](#) page.

Third party information, including of individuals, in submissions

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