



# 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.



## 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

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.

### Background

I bring the perspectives of membership of the Department of Education and Training's Equity Research and Innovation Panel and Chair of Regional Development Australia (Tasmania) Committee to the pressing national issue of RRR higher education aspiration and participation.

I make this submission as a researcher and university educator with 25 years' experience working in Launceston and Warrnambool and researching nationally in RRR Australia and participating in regional development bodies. Recent project which are drawn on in this submission include (1) why some rural communities have superior outcomes for higher education access, participation and success; (2) how to provide RRR parents and families with the information they to support their children's higher education aspiration; (3) how to inform and support rural people's higher education aspiration; and (4) how to form partnerships between universities, other education sectors, industry and communities to expose education pathways to RRR jobs. I also draw on experiences of setting up the Deakin at Your Doorstep Associate degree partnership with TAFEs in regional Victoria and oversight of the University of Tasmania pathway programs.

Papers and further information about the projects on which this submission is based are available on request.

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

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

Blended and online learning, sub bachelor courses and partnerships with VET providers, particularly TAFEs, and local adult education can be successful used to expand higher education options if there is local support; ideally a combination of peers and educators, not necessarily topic experts. Shared study places help: they can be existing, eg. libraries, or shared university centres. Block in person sessions with university academics assist.

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?

Pathways are attractive to regional students and attract additional students. When Deakin at Your Doorstep was established in 2010 the number of new students at the 6 regional TAFE partners plus Deakin exceeded the previous and expected annual combined new enrolment. VET exit qualifications reduce perceived student risk that a course may not suit. Effective pathways with embedded qualifications require two-way credit of units, negotiated shared enrolment and support services and take time and effort to get 'right'.

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

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

Pre-admission: mentors from rural backgrounds; introduction to university campus and services, for families as well as school leavers;

Pre and post admission: people in/from the home community who have been to university and can provide advice that demystifies higher education.

### 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?

The most important action is **clarifying future career options by exposing the jobs of the future in regional areas and making RRR families and communities aware that STEM will underpin most good RRR jobs**, whether technical/VET qualified or professional/higher education qualified. Then the education pathways to those jobs must be made clear, and appear attainable for RRR young people and adults.

The University of Tasmania Pathways to Success and a Place in Tasmania's Future Economy program showed that partnerships between universities, industries and rural schools were effective in influencing students' aspirations. Students related to young professionals they met on industry visits, and who came into their schools. These were real people doing jobs that rural school students could picture themselves doing in the future. Teachers and Principals reported that the program increased their knowledge of careers and education pathways to those careers. Having project officers who acted as 'translators' between industry and teachers assisted teachers to incorporate industry experiences and examples into the Australian curriculum. The four-year project left a legacy of curriculum materials and school-industry networks that schools and industry reported they would continue to use.

Raising aspiration requires both '**disruptions**', interventions that inform educational aspiration, and '**bridges**' which support higher education participation through facilitating access to information, physical, financial, academic and social resources. The appropriate balance of disruptions and bridges tends to change as young people move from primary school through high school. Adults can be at any stage on the aspiration and expectation trajectory, therefore programs that include disruptions and bridges are likely to be most effective for adults. Both 'disruptions' and 'bridges', should be jointly resourced by universities AND RRR communities (not necessarily financially) and draw on social capital resources of universities AND RRR communities.

A clear message from the points above is that raising education aspiration is best achieved through a partnership approach that includes universities, schools and rural community resources. Coasters, a network of young people with professional and other skilled jobs in North West Tasmania is an example of a regional community resource committed to raising educational aspirations. They are working in partnership with the University of Tasmania (see <https://www.cradlecoast.com/>).

Other points revealed from a 2018 survey of over 3000 current higher education students from regional and remote home postcodes studying at five universities:

- work with RRR employers - they are a powerful influencer of RRR higher education participation, particularly for mature age students (mature age students are a larger proportion of the RRR than metro higher education cohort);
- start informing aspiration early, from mid-primary school;
- take RRR students to universities AND bring universities to RRR communities;
- provide local preparation programs;

- build capacity in RRR communities to be the front line ‘triage’ for potential students by giving locals (eg. in libraries, and schools) connections to real people in universities, not just websites.

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

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

Through research partnerships, established and built through active connection with RRR industries, eg. dairy industry and Tasmanian Institute for Agriculture in Burnie; working with RRR employers to attract and retain students (scholarships, holiday jobs, support for current workforce to study); going to RRR communities regularly and establishing genuine partnerships with schools, TAFE, libraries, adult education, local government, businesses and community groups.

Employing academic and professional staff who live in the RRR community where a campus is based stimulates growth. Many functions in a modern university can be performed equally well at a distance, eg. teaching online units, and back office functions from pay roll to marketing.

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

AND

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

Stronger pathways from TAFEs/VET; providing information for families to demystify higher education and equip them to support children and adult family members to develop aspirations, make informed choices about pathways to careers, and to study; locally well-supported blended learning with onsite academic mentors who are not necessarily topic experts; marketing the attractiveness and lower cost of regional lifestyles as higher accommodation costs and longer transport times impact more and more in metropolitan areas.

Governments need to recognise the spillover benefits of regional campuses in terms of regional economic growth and reduced pressure on metro housing and transport infrastructure. They must factor that into university funding for regional 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?

This role should be a champion for RRR education would be valuable in keeping the RRR issue to the forefront of government and public attention. Some monitoring mechanism is required. The role could be somewhat similar to that of the Human Rights Commissioner

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?

The targets set in the Bradley Review should be revisited. The national target of 40 per cent of 25- to 34-year-olds will have attained at least a bachelor-level qualification applied to RRR Australia by

2030. Bradley recommendations about funding and financial support for higher education in and for RRR Australia should also be taken out and dusted off.

## 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.

- The most important action is **clarifying future career options by exposing the jobs of the future in regional areas and making RRR families and communities aware that STEM will underpin most good RRR jobs**, whether technical/VET qualified or professional/higher education qualified. Then the education pathways to those jobs must be made clear, and appear attainable for RRR young people and adults.
- Brokers who can work with industries, schools and higher education to forge connections and translate between education and industry language are an effective strategy for linking school to careers and raising aspirations.
- Programs to raise aspirations and must draw on the resources of RRR communities, including employers, schools and others who support higher education participation. Universities should work as partners with RRR communities in raising aspirations and supporting transitions to higher education.
- More attention is required to providing information for parents and families to demystify higher education and equip them to support children and adult family members to develop aspirations, make informed choices about pathways to careers, and to study will improve students' ability to realise their higher education aspiration. Schools are not necessarily equipped with the future labour market knowledge or resources to do this alone and must act in partnership with industries and higher education and VET providers.
- Pathways that include VET qualifications, associate degrees, university diplomas are attractive to RRR students and can expand RRR higher education participation. Multiple exit points along the pathway to a bachelor degree reduce perceived risk or investing in higher education study.
- University partnerships with RRR institutions, eg. libraries, TAFEs, adult education, who can support online students and facilitate local peer student support groups are a cost effective way of providing non-academic support, as well as generic academic support that will assist retain RRR students studying locally.



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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.

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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.

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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)