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The Hon Dr Denis Napthine
Chair, Expert Advisory Group
National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy
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Dear Dr Napthine,

National Regional, Rural and Remote Strategy Framing Paper

The University of Sydney welcomes the opportunity to be part of this important consultation process to develop innovative and effective approaches to improve the educational outcomes in regional, rural and remote Australia. As a University we are very committed to supporting regional and remote Australia and to advancing educational opportunities for students from these areas. While we are a metropolitan-based University, we have longstanding educational and research activities in regional NSW, including locations such as Orange, Dubbo, Broken Hill, Lismore and Narrabri.

Many of the themes of the *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* conducted in 2017 (Halsey Review) remain relevant for this consultation process and you will notice significant overlap and similarities to many of our suggestions and comments made to the Halsey Review. The University of Sydney is generally supportive of the points made by the Go8 submission to the development of a national RRR strategy, however, in our submission we have drawn out issues and areas we view as especially important.

General recommendations and comments:

- Long-term funding through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPP) is essential.
Under our [Widening Participation and Outreach](#) and [Wingara Mura – Bunga Barrabugu](#) programs, we have a suite of University-wide strategies in place to lift higher education participation and completion rates for students from low socio-economic and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. While currently relatively small in scale and coverage, independent evaluations of our outreach, access, and participation programs supported by the federal government's Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP) suggest great potential for them to be expanded in regional communities. The main factor holding us back from making more of our widening participation programs accessible to students in regional areas is limited and uncertain funding.
- Continuation and expansion of funding for the Regional Study Hub program is needed.
- Improving levels of financial support available to students from RRR areas who need to move away from home for study is critical.

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- Enhancing access to suitable and affordable accommodation remains one of the key issues in order to attract/keep students in RRR Australia but also for students from RRR areas relocating to metropolitan campuses for study.
- Regionally-based universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education providers play vital roles in providing local access to post-school education for students who grow up in regional, rural and remote communities. Unfortunately, current funding and policy settings encourage metropolitan universities to compete with their regional counterparts when it comes to recruiting talented students from regional areas, and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. Policy settings could be adjusted to provide financial incentives for metropolitan universities to collaborate with regional education providers to boost overall levels of educational participation and create more and better study pathways for students in RRR communities.

University of Sydney's pledge to RRR Australia and example of our activities

A minimum 25 per cent of students commencing in the Sydney Medical Program (SMP) are recruited from a rural background. More than 25 per cent of our total domestic medical student intake completes a full year of immersive training in the Central West, Far West and Northern NSW during their studies.

In addition to the contribution we make to educating and training medical students in regional NSW, we provide rural placement training opportunities and deliver pre- and post-registration courses in a large number of other health disciplines. This enables us to provide a coordinated interdisciplinary approach to health workforce education through our Rural Clinical School, and through the Departments of Rural Health at Broken Hill and Lismore. A key reason for the success of these sites is the strong collaboration that occurs with other universities, local health districts, primary health services, early learning providers and schools, state and local government agencies, businesses, and community organisations. Another example of this collaboration are programs we run in rural schools that have substantial numbers of Aboriginal students to raise awareness of opportunities for careers in health as well as to support interested students in educational opportunities.

Noting the review's terms of reference and the main purposes of the Framing Paper, please find attached our response to the specific challenges as set out in the paper as well as summary information to some of our RRR education and research initiatives. These include programs funded by governments, philanthropy, University funds, or through a combination of these sources.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any of the ideas or projects mentioned in our submission.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Pip Pattison AO
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Appendix A University of Sydney responses to the Framing Paper's six key challenges

Appendix B Examples of University of Sydney education and research activities aimed at improving educational and other outcomes in regional, rural and remote Australia

Appendix A

University of Sydney responses to the National Regional, Rural and Remote Strategy Framing Paper's six key challenges

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

Higher Education participation is often linked to what is normative in a community and in most Australian rural communities rates of university access are below the national average. As such, the range of courses offered by regional education providers tend to be vocational and not heavily STEM focussed.

We encourage enhanced support for existing educational outreach initiatives from both metropolitan and regionally based higher education institutions. Doing so would enable increased exposure and visibility to educational opportunities that may be available to students from Regional, Rural and Remote (RRR) areas. This could include a resource allocation/grants scheme for institutional outreach initiatives (like those currently funded by HEPPP) in support of the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy. One example for potential partnerships could be dual degrees that are offered in RRR and metropolitan settings. Opportunities may also be increased if regional universities could offer and further promote Basic Foundation Courses which can be suitable as stepping stones for future courses at metropolitan locations such as engineering. Regional Study Hubs have also been successful and could be expanded.

Long-term, sustained investment in HEPPP funding will be critical for longevity and sustainability of equity in higher education, ultimately enhancing educational opportunities for young Australian from RRR backgrounds. Funding in recent years has been disappointing in its trend towards decreased HEPPP allocations for institutions across the board, which has left access and participation initiatives for RRR students vulnerable.

We echo the continuing prioritisation by higher education institutions of increased multi-modal, online and flexible delivery modules embedded within educational offerings to support educational engagement and increased educational opportunity for students from RRR backgrounds.

Recommendation:

Increased collaboration, both cross-institutional and cross-sectoral, would be valuable in conjunction with a potential review of funding and grants mechanisms (including HEPPP) to ensure drivers for augmented collaborative student engagement practices.

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

We strongly advocate for a holistic approach which focuses on engaging family, community and other key influencers to promote emotional and social wellbeing for individual students during key periods of transition to and engagement with higher education.

We believe that prioritisation of immersive University residential program opportunities for high school students from RRR backgrounds can play a role in offsetting some of the significant financial, social and emotional challenges experienced by this cohort when commencing tertiary education. Our experience indicates that students from RRR areas benefit significantly from opportunities to visit a metropolitan university campus. Such experiences enable

students from RRR backgrounds to familiarise themselves with the location, experience the learning and facilities on offer and to begin envisaging themselves as future students. A critical component of residential opportunities is the delivery of information sessions about the scholarship and support programs available to students experiencing disadvantage and/or relocation from RRR areas. Key evaluative feedback from participants to residential programs facilitated by the Widening, Participation, and Outreach team at the University of Sydney indicate that following these transformative residential experiences students experience increased levels motivation and confidence to continue their journey to higher education as well as capacity to envisage themselves at University.

We encourage the Expert Panel to consider funding support for a pilot residential program, specifically for RRR students. It is envisioned that this type of program would draw upon key evaluative indicators for increased student aspiration, confidence and sense of belonging at University, which may then lead to the development of a research informed evidence base to inform and guide future practice.

Providing students support in relocating could be achieved by HEPPP and associated funding allocations, which have the capacity to provide amplified support for outreach and educational enrichment initiatives from universities to RRR schools. These initiatives would have a focused promotion of building academic attainment among students in RRR communities, alongside further exposure and visibility surrounding tertiary education opportunities that may be available.

More specific targeted student support could be achieved by building RRR student networks at metropolitan universities, additional mentoring and providing other social, cultural and sporting opportunities which draw upon common and shared experiences or challenges, may help to enhance the student experience for students from RRR backgrounds. At the University of Sydney, we are prioritising initiatives to build social connection, belonging and a more inclusive community for all of our students, and we recognise RRR students as a cohort for whom the benefits will be especially impactful.

We support the consideration of adequate academic, financial and social support packages for students electing to move from RRR areas to universities in other locations, including accommodation, travel and other course-related educational support subsidies. Without access to suitable and affordable accommodation the lack of security bears the risk that students are unable to achieve their potential. Data from the 2017 Universities Australia Student Finances Survey showed that students from regional and remote areas have significantly higher levels of expenditure and financial stress when compared to other student cohorts.

Reforms should include the reconsideration of and/or extension to existing deferral period available for key scholarships and accommodation placements to enable students from RRR backgrounds to have increased geographic mobility through adequate personal financial preparation and planning. A review of current levels of student income support is essential as this has been identified as a long-standing challenge by a number of stakeholders.

Recommendation:

We support the suggestion of the Go8 submission to increase the level of student income support as well as the provision of more affordable student accommodation.

Challenge C: Raising aspirations for tertiary education

We agree that addressing the lack of exposure to university life and communities, as mentioned in the Framing Paper, constitutes one of the main factors that need to be addressed in order to raise aspirations for tertiary education. Our Widening, Participation and Outreach



Program has been very successful in providing that exposure to more and more students in RRR areas. For example, the University of Sydney's Regional Hub program targets remote indigenous schools with programs to develop strong study habits, workshops on campus and a volunteer program that sees University of Sydney students involved with year 10 literacy programs.

Raising the aspirations for tertiary education can also be enabled through students' critical early engagement with positive and/or local role models that showcase the benefits of higher education and associated opportunities. For example, local success stories can become ambassadors and schools can organise successful graduates to talk to current high school students and motivate them. Additionally, purposeful partnerships between Universities, RRR schools and community key influencers can allow RRR students to guide informed decision making surrounding education and career choices. It is important that prospective students have access to well-trained career advisers in order to raise awareness of job prospects following graduation.

More generally it is important to be aware of the fact that short term student placements in RRR areas also have added benefits beyond the experience of the student. For many – seeing a student on placement and the engagement of that student with others certainly can drive a dream to go into tertiary education. Some of the encounters can be as brief as two weeks, but are able to make a difference. In order to enable these brief encounters and raise aspirations we have developed the "Service Learning in Indigenous Community" units of study. These units of study provide students with the opportunity to work on an interdisciplinary project in one of the University's Indigenous Service Learning Hubs. Students work on real-world projects that have been prioritised and identified by Indigenous communities, gaining valuable experience in working in RRR areas and across disciplinary boundaries.

Moreover, a successful education strategy needs to be targeted towards the job market in RRR areas but for example offering specialised courses or pathway programs where the first part can be completed rurally.

Consultation between the Regional Education Expert Advisory Group and RRR students, schools and communities would be beneficial. This would acknowledge the diverse and differing challenges, opportunities and aspirations unique to groups of students from each of these geographic categorisations. Such discussions are required to ensure responsive and differentiated policy and practice.

Increased funding from HEPPP and associated sources would enable further opportunities to utilise current University students, particularly those who have come from RRR communities, to powerfully facilitate learning and enrichment activities both in RRR schools (outreach) and on-campus.

Recommendation:

Consistent and sustainable HEPP funding, transparently allocated through competitive processes. Increased long-term HEPP funding would also provide a more equitable solution as opposed to the suggestion of lifting the funding freeze for students from RRR areas as suggested by some stakeholders. It is crucial that funding remains equitable and avoids providing incentives for students to game the system.

Challenge D: RRR often experience multiple forms of disadvantage

As the Framing Paper appropriately indicates, RRR students often face multiple disadvantages and are more likely to study part-time, be older, and/or from low SES backgrounds. For example, the high percentage of RRR students from low SES backgrounds makes them less likely to be financially supported by scholarships awarded in full or part on

academic excellence. As such we strongly support the expansion of the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships as announced by the Government in November 2018. Financial support is essential in overcoming these disadvantages. For many RRR students the up-front costs of relocating and commencing study often constitute insurmountable obstacles. It is also important to develop student-centric support models for such students, so that the barriers can be addressed and support offered holistically. Too often, multiple disadvantages are addressed through multiple, disconnected efforts, and the total impact is much less positive than it could be.

As described above, a key factor in overcoming these disadvantages is to ensure that Widening Participation and Outreach programs have sustainable resources to ensure that high school students get exposure to universities and are able to make informed choices about higher education options. In addition, specific rural and regional training support services at Universities will be able to provide targeted support and link students with relevant peers.

At the University of Sydney we offer a number of courses in block mode (also called 'away from base' or 'intensive') to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This means students can attend three intensive sessions (one or more days) each semester on campus. The remainder of the course is completed independently at home.

Online delivery and block mode of delivery that is combined with scholarships to enable student attendance has been very successful at our institution in assisting with RRR participation rates, particularly for students from indigenous backgrounds.

Recommendation:

We support the expansion of innovative ways of delivering courses such as block mode delivery as well as targeted relocation aid of financial nature that is then supplemented with relevant student support services on site which will assist students overcoming these multiple forms of disadvantages.

Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas

Any expansion or strengthening of regional universities creates jobs and as such contributes to economic growth directly but also indirectly by increasing and diversifying the level of skills in the region making it more attractive for employers. In that context it is crucial that educational offerings are targeted towards the demand in these areas, for example as it relates to agriculture, health, tourism and new opportunities within the region.

The current funding model for University Departments of Rural Health and Rural Clinical Schools of two to three-year contracts with rather late notification of contract renewals by the Commonwealth Government is a major constraint on planning security and the employment and retention of highly qualified staff. This reduces the potential to attract people to these positions and compromises the operation of these rural academic centres.

At the University of Sydney we have observed demand of international students for longer term placements in rural settings, particularly for health professions, however we currently do not have sufficient fee paying places at our rural sites to meet this demand. Moreover, international students are prohibited from undertaking short- and longer-term clinical placements in RRR communities supported by funding from the federal department of health's Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program (RHMT).

For example, many Canadian students have indicated that their employment prospects when they return home would be advantaged if they could complete a rural year in training while in Australia. Granting fee paying places and taking into consideration that some students would take up an extended rural placement would be one mechanism to attract staff and students to



RRR regions. Growing international education in regional areas would also serve to provide an economic boost for local communities.

In the Health area successful examples at Sydney University include the engagement of Regional Development Australia with the Western NSW Local Health District and the hosting of overseas physicians as observers at Dubbo Base Hospital.

Recommendation:

We see substantial opportunity for universities to partner with other tertiary providers, government, industry and community not just to support students to engage in RRR placements and internships of the kind just mentioned, but also to engage in industry and community projects in RRR settings. Establishing such intra- and cross-sectional partnerships to increase the flow of students into RRR areas will expand opportunities for students and regions alike.

Challenge F: Implementing and monitoring a national strategy

Any national strategy should avoid a uniform approach and acknowledge the diversity and unique circumstances of RRR areas. This has been reflected by the Framing Paper, which on page 5 notes that lower rates of participation in RRR communities are strongly influenced by outcomes at all earlier stages of education. This understanding is essential for developing a strategy that is capable in addressing these determinants and providing pathways and opportunity that are targeted to address the diverse challenges faced by prospective students living in different RRR communities.

Recognising the value of establishing enabling programs and adequate associated support services for students who have experienced multiple forms of disadvantage is essential. Particularly, this includes students from RRR areas, Indigenous students and students from low-socio economic backgrounds to maximise opportunities for access, transition, retention and success.

Recommendation:

A National Regional Education Commissioner could serve as a central point of leading initiatives and discussions about higher education in RRR areas. For such an office to be successful it is crucial that sufficient, certain and sustained funding is committed to implement agreed strategies.

APPENDIX B

Examples of University of Sydney innovative initiatives serving to enhance educational access and outcomes in regional, rural and remote Australia

1. The Broken Hill Department of Rural Health (as one example of our approach to community-engaged education, training and research in regional, rural and remote NSW)

Established in 1996 with support from the federal government, the [Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health](#) (BHUDRH) was created to improve health care in far western NSW by providing high quality support, education and training for rural and remote health workers.

Its focus is to establish relevant teaching and support environments, promote opportunities for student placements in the region, encourage experienced academic staff to spend time in rural and remote communities and foster partnerships to improve the quality of health care for rural Australians.

Since 1997 BH UDRH has worked closely with the Far West Local Health District (FWLHD), Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) and Divisions of General Practice to deliver a successful rural attachment program for medical, nursing and allied health students. It also provides comprehensive research training for general practitioners, primary health care workers, Indigenous mental health trainees and professional development support for local health professionals.

More recently our BHUDRH joined forces with the Population Health Division of the FWLHD to expand the existing capacity of population health research and development in the region. Together they operate the Broken Hill Centre for Remote Health Research, which undertakes epidemiological research and surveillance and other research relevant to population health and the delivery of health services in far western NSW. The centre also aims to enhance national expertise in rural and remote health research and translate research into policy and practice.

BHUDRH has a strong population health focus and supports existing health providers to improve health service development especially in public health and primary health care.

Examples of BHUDRH activities:

Community and student Engagement

The BHUDRH's vision is to build healthy, resilient and sustainable communities where all students have the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability. Its partnerships enable it to focus our collective energies and resources to address the factors that hinder educational, health and career attainment of children in far western New South Wales.

By 2020 the BHUDRH aims to address the inequities confronted by rural, remote, and Indigenous students living in our region through the implementation and evaluation of best practice models that integrate health, education and career choices.

The ['Health Career Academy Program Manual: Aspiration and Promoting Health Careers for Rural and Remote Secondary School Students'](#) was officially launched at the BHUDRH in 2015.

The Health Career program and supporting manual aims to build aspirations for health careers amongst secondary students in rural and remote Australia.

Extended Clinical Placement Program

Offered since 2009, the [Broken Hill Extended Clinical Placement Program](#) is an innovation in undergraduate medical education. It enables students from different medical schools to come together and learn in a combined program for an extended period. The BHECP Program equips students with additional and special skills, in addition to providing the highest quality core clinical learning.

Primary Health Care Undergraduate Nursing Elective

The BHUDRH's undergraduate nursing program is designed and delivered in partnership with Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation and the Far West Local Health District and Remote Clusters. The program also works in collaboration with Justice Health and Aboriginal Medical Services within far west NSW to enhance student placement opportunities.

Cross Cultural Education Program

The BHUDRH, in partnership with Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation and the far west Local Health District New South Wales, has developed a program of [Cross Cultural Perspectives in Aboriginal Health](#) for health science students, new employees to the region and organisation groups within the area.

The training is a fundamental foundation for those working in health with local Aboriginal communities. It aims to raise the awareness of health issues faced by Aboriginal people today, and enhance knowledge and understanding of Australia's history from an Aboriginal perspective and how this affects the health of communities.

Mental Health Academic Program

The BHUDRH receives funding under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Action Plan on Mental Health to employ a mental health academic. The position involves academic work, teaching and management of students undergoing clinical placements. The academic position is also encouraged to increase direct service delivery of mental health services within the local community.

Broken Hill Centre for Remote Health Research

Established in 2003 as a joint initiative with the former Far West Area Health Service, the Centre for Remote Health Research (CRHC) aims to enhance the national expertise in rural and remote health research and the translation of research into policy and practice.

The Centre's activities are informed by local research needs in Far Western NSW, while also using its base in Broken Hill as a 'natural laboratory' of national significance. The partnership between the Centre and the local health service providers aim to jointly plan and undertake research into issues of importance to the health outcomes of the residents and communities in western NSW.

The principles which underpin the Centre's objectives, work and approach are: working with communities; promoting an environment of mutual respect; commitment to ethical research; commitment to excellence in research; commitment to supporting remote health researchers.

2. Examples of University of Sydney widening participation and outreach activities that are having an impact on educational access and outcomes in regional, rural and remote communities

Education and Training Out West (ETOW)

Our Transition to Uni program is a partnership between our Compass Program, Dubbo Senior College and the Dubbo-based Education and Training Out West (ETOW) organisation. The program provides additional mentoring and advice about alternative entry pathways, student support services and scholarships to Year 11 and 12 students to support their transition to higher education. Through one-on-one mentoring and group workshops, the program aims to address the specific needs and concerns unique to pre-tertiary students in regional areas, specifically Central West NSW.

Each student receives between 5-25 face-to-face contacts with program staff. Six workshops with small groups of students requiring more support than others were organised and well attended. A workshop with Centrelink was well attended by parents and students.

Evaluation of the program in 2015 indicated that 38 percent of the participating students progressed to enrol at a university. A further 40 per cent of the cohort took a gap year, primarily to undertake work to ensure they have sufficient funds to attend university and/or qualify for Independent Youth Allowance through Centrelink. An additional 20 per cent are either enrolled at TAFE or have stable long-term employment.

mOTor Skills Program

[Motor Skills](#) is partnership between our Compass program, the Faculty of Health Sciences, our School of Rural Health, and partner primary schools in Central Western, Far Western and Northern NSW.

Occupational Therapy students complete clinical placements at partner primary schools, providing practical OT support to Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 students and their teachers. As part of the clinical placement, the OT students develop both remedial programs for students identified by the school as well as advice and resources to teachers for additional strategies to further develop students' fine and gross motor skills through classroom-based activities.

Evaluation completed by service learning placement students and classroom teachers following the completion of the program found that 100 per cent of those surveyed agreed that the program effectively increased students' confidence completing school tasks and increasing students' motivation. 100 per cent of surveyed service learning placement students felt that their placement had a positive impact on the students, teachers and staff at the school. 100 per cent of surveyed service learning placement students agreed that the OT clinical supervisor provided practical feedback and positive support, which helped them to further develop their Occupational Therapy skills.

Madmaker Regional Tours

Developed by our Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology in collaboration with Microsoft, [Madmaker](#) involves using Arduino Esplora boards with school students to investigate fun and interactive ways to use science, technology, engineering and maths to solve real-world problems.

Our MadMaker regional tours deliver student workshops and accredited teacher training sessions in high schools. Surveys conducted following the program indicated students were much more likely to pursue a career in science or engineering as a result of participating in this activity, and would like to continue doing similar activities after the experience. Teachers indicated overwhelmingly that the activities and platform would be easy to deploy in their schools.

National Computer Science School Challenge

Our [National Computer Science School \(NCSS\) Challenge](#) is a computer programming competition for primary and secondary school students designed to provide students with an intensive step-by-step in-school program to learn how to code and improve their digital literacy.

Run by [Grok Learning](#), a new education start-up at the University of Sydney, the NCSS challenge teaches students how to code using Python 3.4 – an easy-to-learn scripting language used by major online companies such as Google and Facebook for many different purposes including infrastructure and web applications as well as scientific research. In 2016, we also offered teachers from partner schools professional development ahead of the NCSS Challenge.

100 per cent of participating teachers surveyed agreed that the workshop helped them think of new ways, to teach, research or manage the topic and enable them to reflect effectively on their own practice. Whilst participating schools are currently predominantly metropolitan-based, with funding support this program could readily be scaled up for delivery in regional Australia.

Career and post-school training/study apps

We have developed two pre-tertiary outreach apps, [Subject Finder](#) (year 10) and [Career Finder](#) (year 7-10), both of which aim to link students' interests with careers and key learning area's (KLA's). Both are available for download by students regardless of their geographic location. Feedback from users and the families suggest these apps are viewed as very worthwhile and helpful, and with funding these technologies could be promoted more widely to students from regional, rural and remote schools.

Preparation for Senior Study Regional Program

Our Year 10 [Preparation for Senior Study Regional Program](#) aims to assist Year 10 students in developing good study habits in preparation for their senior years of high school. It involves Year 10 students at schools in Dubbo and Forbes spending a day in-school attending workshops, conducted by University academics, Compass staff and mental health experts, designed to increase their preparedness for the HSC and university. The three workshops cover general study skills, English examination preparation and mental health in relation to exam pressure and anxiety.

Thinking Ahead Regional

[Thinking Ahead Regional](#) is a two phase workshop delivered to students in regional areas that introduces them to the criteria they will need to address when applying for university scholarships or alternative entry pathways. The workshop focuses on helping Yr 11 students understand the nature of scholarships and their criteria; the value and need for extracurricular involvement; and how to articulate, in writing, the leadership skills and qualities they have developed through their experiences. The writing exercises in Phase 2 of the program are preceded by some general information about what scholarships are and how they can help students at university, and some school-specific content around extracurricular activities available in Phase 1. 96 per cent of participating students felt that as a result of the program they knew how to articulate their leadership skill and qualities that they had developed through extra-curricular involvement. 92 per cent of student agreed that completion of the program motivated them to apply for equity scholarships to a university.

Promote Yourself Regional

[Promote Yourself Regional](#) is a scaffolded scholarship application writing workshop we provide specifically for Year 12 students. Students practise writing persuasively about themselves and receive support in drafting scholarship applications, using the University of Sydney's E12 Early Offer application as a resource. The Promote Yourself workshops are designed to build upon students' learning about scholarships and scholarship-writing developed through the Year 11 Thinking Ahead workshops. 99 per cent of participating students agreed that the workshop left them feeling more confident about writing a scholarship application and similarly, 99 per cent

agreed that the workshop provided them with new knowledge about how to write about their skills and experiences in a scholarship style application. 87 per cent agreed the workshop motivated them to apply for scholarships in general.

Spectacular Science

[Spectacular Science](#) is a STEM-focused campus experience led by our Faculty of Science. Targeted at Year 9 students from low SES and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders the programs offers them first-hand experience of the intriguing and up to the minute research that scientists are working on in a series of interactive activities. As a result of this initiative students become more familiar with the a university environment, build enthusiasm for science, and increase their understanding of the relationship between high school, university-level STEM subjects and future occupations.

3. Examples of University of Sydney initiatives specifically aimed at improving the health, education, training and employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Guaranteed and subsidised accommodation, and peer mentoring, for commencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

See: <http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2016/12/08/boosted-support-for-aboriginal-students-in-critical-first-year.html>

Regional Hub Expansion project and STEMex

Educational outreach across regional and remote NSW to increase access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to higher education and in STEM subjects:

<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/05/31/sydney-travels-to-the-regions-.html>
<http://sydney.edu.au/wpo/high-schools/regional/index.shtml>

Scholarship program, supporting local Aboriginal people to become the health experts in their own community

See <http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/06/30/first-cadets-from-poche-centre-for-indigenous-health-graduate-.html>

Dental program in schools in rural and remote NSW, to improve health and educational outcomes for Aboriginal school students

See, for example:

<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2016/09/23/grinners-are-school-winners.html>
<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/02/21/water-flowing-into-remote-schools-and-parks-.html>
<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2015/11/20/school-water-program-to-brighten-smiles-in-remote-nsw.html>

Centre for Research Excellence: Indigenous Health an Alcohol

We are a key partner in the [NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence: Indigenous Health and Alcohol](#), which is pursuing evidence- and community-based research to create the best opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to find solutions to alcohol problems that can have a devastating effect on families, children, education access and outcomes. Representatives of Aboriginal community-controlled health services regularly engage with our staff to share learnings for implementation in communities. As part of this collaboration, we are also supporting Aboriginal research students and trainees who work on alcohol and related issues.

Aboriginal nutrition project node, to inform education programs for local communities

See <http://sydney.edu.au/charles-perkins-centre/our-research/current-research/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health/aboriginal-nutrition.html>



Service Learning in Community

See:

<http://sydney.edu.au/about-us/vision-and-values/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-participation/service-learning-in-indigenous-communities.html>

<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2016/08/17/community-classrooms--students-meet-local-needs-while-learning.html>

<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2016/08/17/unique-learning-hubs-established-with-communities-in-nt-and-nsw-.html>

Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion

The [Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Health Promotion](#) is one of the flagship courses of the Sydney Medical School's, School of Public Health. It teaches Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health promotion workers from around the Australia who, for the last 21 years, have come to Sydney for six one-week blocks. For the first time, in 2017, in addition to the Sydney cohort, we have offered the program in Lismore to 10+ Indigenous health workers in Northern NSW.

Wingara Mura-Bunga Barrabugu Summer and Winter Programs

Academic and cultural week-long workshop for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students from across the country, equipping them to connect what they study now with their options for the future:

<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/01/16/aboriginal-teens-call-university-of-sydney-home-for-a-week.html>

<http://sydney.edu.au/wpo/indigenous/summer-program/index.shtml>

<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/06/30/indigenous-students-prepare-for-final-exams-on-campus.html>

<http://sydney.edu.au/wpo/indigenous/winter-program/index.shtml>