

National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy Framing Paper

Flinders University Submission

Flinders University, as a member of the Innovative Research Universities, supports the IRU submission on the National Regional, Rural and Remote (RRR) Education Strategy Framing paper. The points below compliment and expand on those in the IRU submission.

Flinders Context

Flinders has a long and proud history of engaging in regional, rural and remote Australia to deliver education into these regions, as well as providing RRR students with access to the full suite of educational opportunities available at one of our metropolitan campuses.

19% of Flinders University students are from RRR areas. These students are educated not only at one of our campuses in Adelaide, but at more than 19 campuses and locations across South Australia, the Northern Territory and Victoria.

We have particular recognized strength in delivery of medical, nursing and health programs across regional, rural and remote Australia, including delivery of the NT medical program from our campus in Darwin and work integrated learning programs for our students across a very large number of regional, rural and remote sites.

We also have a long established partnership with TAFE (SA) in delivery of enabling programs to students at TAFE SA campuses across SA and have agreements to collaborate in the delivery of education through regional study hubs in Murray Bridge, Spencer Gulf and the Barossa. We also have a long standing partnership in delivery of collaborative dual awards between Flinders and TAFE SA which provides students with benefit of a fully integrated (not just articulated) VET and HE education experience and outcomes.

Challenge A: Study Options in RRR areas.

We support the development of regional study hubs as one way to provide greater access to education in the regions, but argue that this is only part of the solution to increase access for RRR students.

The range of educational opportunities which can be provided through the study hubs is necessarily limited by scale and is unlikely to fully meet the educational aspirations and capabilities of those in the regions. These smaller and more dispersed hubs need to be considered as an adjunct to larger bases such as regional campuses, as well larger metropolitan campuses.

We fully support the IRU position for greater support for students who may choose to study part of the course closer to home, either through a study hub or regional campus, and then part of their course at a metropolitan campus.

Challenge B: Relocating RRR students.

It is important to recognize that those from the regions may prefer to attend a metropolitan campus for their education to access not only the broader range of courses which may be

available, but also access to experiences and environments in which they can interact and learn with and from others with differing backgrounds and interests.

Barriers to access are many for RRR students wishing to attend a metropolitan campus, but financial barriers are a particular concern. Increasing minimum financial support for those needing to live away from home would create more opportunities for RRR students to access the same range of educational opportunities and experiences which are available to those who are from the cities.

We note that students who wish to undertake a work integrated learning experience in a regional, rural or remote location as part of their education face particular financial difficulties. Accommodation costs and loss of income when away from the normal place of study reduces access to WIL opportunities in the regions. Living and working in a regional area during study increases the likelihood of a graduate considering working in a region upon graduation. We would argue that consideration be given to providing additional support to those who undertake a WIL experience in a regional, rural or remote area.

Challenge C: Raising Aspirations and Challenge D: Multiple Disadvantage

Flinders experience is that our engagement with high schools and communities across regional areas of SA and NT plays a vital part in aspiration raising for students in the regions. Our delivery of outreach programs from year 8 onwards plays a vital part in broadening young people's awareness of opportunities beyond school, and also promotes the importance of completing high school. These outreach activities are funded through HEPPP and the Indigenous Student Success programs. We also currently support specific transition and orientation activities for regional and indigenous students through these funding sources, as well as supporting other low SES students. Creating a funding program specifically for RRR students would allow increased outreach and better targeting of support programs for those from RRR areas.

Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas.

Flinders has established a branch of its [New Venture Institute](#) on the Limestone Coast in Mount Gambier. With support from the Federal, State and Local governments, [eNVision Limestone Coast](#) provides access to mentoring and pre-accelerator programs for local entrepreneurs and small businesses. These programs stimulate economic growth jobs by harnessing the creativity and innovation typical of those who live and work in regional, rural and remote Australia. This initiative would not have been possible without support from the Entrepreneurs' Programme and the National Innovation and Science Agenda.

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