



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

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

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

Submission details

I am making this submission as a: *

Educator

parent/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

Central Queensland University

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

Yes

No

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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.

Challenge A

- ***What opportunities exist to expand options for further study in RRR areas?***
- Increasing the reach and affordability of reliability of telecommunications is vital and implementation of recommendations from the Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia (BIRRR) submission to the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) would enable universities servicing RRR areas to extend their reach and improve access and participation rates in these areas. Priority should be given to the establishment of regional tech hubs that can provide local technical support – these could potentially collocate with regional study hubs, which would benefit communities more broadly.
- Provide additional funding for universities who ‘service’ these area, such as:
 - uncapping Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding for courses delivered in regional and remote areas
 - guaranteeing funding for courses for which there is a demonstrable demand from regional communities and industry.
- Increase investment in Regional Study Hubs and the universities that support them.
- Extend Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP) funding and eligibility to include all students from recognised equity groups for which there is lack of parity in access to higher education. These include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all those living in rural, regional and remote location.
- ***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?***
- These services and opportunities already exist for dual sector universities such as CQUniversity but this could be further enhanced with the participation of additional industries, health services and community groups in the provision of Work Integrated Learning and Internship opportunities.
- Implement recommendations from the Halsey Review, including expanding the availability, affordability and accessibility of high quality work experience placements, VET, dual VET/university options and two year associate degree programs for RRR students. The review also recommended the need for the allocation of additional funding support for RRR students to make successful transitions from school including for accommodation, travel and with day to day living expenses
- Expand funding support for enabling programs and also extending their availability to all RRR students who are under-prepared would improve the successful completions of these students, including those transitioning from VET to HE.

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

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

- Supporting students to remain in their local areas rather than relocating is a priority.
- Equity scholarships and other financial aids for items such as text books, travel costs, accommodation, compensation for lack of income when attending residential schools and placements, are critical in providing support and stability to the retention and success of RRR students.
- Facilitating students to access local part time work, such as funding support for students to undertake paid internships would be helpful.
- ***What forms of support might be useful in helping students from RRR backgrounds to continue with their tertiary study?***
- Refer to response to Q1 above, particularly in relation to the need to expand the number of regional study hubs and associated infrastructure, as well as reliable technology and internet access
- ***How can universities assist RRR students to feel like they belong on their campus?***
- Given the lower completion rates for students studying entirely externally, funding support to enable students to attend regular residential schools would go a long way to create that sense of belonging. This requires funding support for transport, accommodation, food and compensation for lost income while attending residential schools and placements.
- Enhanced technology as a tool for facilitating connectedness, including through social media and early engagement strategies.
- Mentoring and 'Buddy' initiatives.

Challenge C: Raising aspirations for tertiary education

- ***What actions would help to raise aspirations and support informed career choices for students from RRR backgrounds?***
- Additional funding to enable universities to extend outreach to schools and remote communities. This is required at both primary and secondary school level as the evidence shows that to break the cycle of generational disadvantage it is critical that universities run outreach programs in primary schools as well.
- A focus on professional development of teachers on the opportunities that further education affords their students would greatly assist in raising aspirations for tertiary education. Funding to work more closely with schools career advisors to ensure careers support is embedded would be an example of how to do this.
- Delivering programs in community that provide people with a broad awareness of possible careers, explore identity formation, and development of effective navigational skills for tertiary education and beyond.
- Developing partnerships with schools in RRR communities to achieve practical outcomes that focus on increasing teacher professional capacities, leverage near-peer role modelling for school students and enhance curriculum.
- Alumni mentoring and other school activities to ensure local students realise the educational pathways possible.

Challenge D: RRR often experience multiple forms of disadvantage

- ***What practical steps can be taken to support RRR students who experience multiple forms of disadvantage?***
- A review of HEPPP allocations to broaden the basis from the number of students from LSES backgrounds to allow for loading for universities that support large numbers of students who have increased needs as a result of multiple forms of disadvantage.
- Additional funding for universities to increase the service options for these students eg. academic learning support/ mental health strategy initiatives.
- ***How can we better support Indigenous people from RRR areas to access and succeed in tertiary education?***
- Implementation of outstanding recommendations from the Behrendt (2012) Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- The wording of Challenge D in this document immediately positions Indigenous people in a deficit standpoint which contributes to and perpetuates their disadvantage. Framing language in documents requires review to raise awareness of deficit language and the subsequent need for rewording for future documents.
- Australia and its universities are strengthened when Indigenous people are positioned from a cultural strengths perspective as opposed to being viewed from a deficit standpoint
- Indigenous students also benefit from mainstream student support services provided whilst allowing for culturally safe spaces
- Strategies to improve better representation across disciplinary fields, eg in the STEM disciplines.
- All university staff need to be supported to understand and undertake mandatory cultural competency training and the curriculum needs to be Indigenous to better support Indigenous students
- Review of current institutional support available for Indigenous students, to identify gaps and implement best practice methodologies
- Institutional commitment to undertaking responsibility of the provision of support for students and staff via appropriate policies, procedures and strategies that align with institutional values
- Investigate and implement community led solutions e.g implement education/social enterprise hubs in RRR communities
- Upon enrolment when Indigenous students identify and provide evidence of low income, a Commonwealth funded Indigenous scholarship or equity scholarship is triggered rather than the current model where students have to undertake an application process that they may not be aware of.

Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas

- ***How can tertiary education providers further stimulate economic growth in RRR areas?***
- Continue high quality research that positively impacts RRR areas, including funding for research that aims to inform best practice in learning and teaching to improve outcomes for RRR students. The closure of the OLT grants and the decision to only fund NPP commissioned projects has had a significant impact on innovative research in higher education. There needs to be provision for continued funding of innovative research into the scholarship of Learning and Teaching with a particular focus on strategies for

engaging students from RRR locations to ensure greater innovation and impact through sharing of evidence based good practice across the sector.

- Continue to provide the courses that require specialist academics who relocate to the regional to take up academic opportunities.
- Continue to pay 'above award' salaries to attract quality staff.
- Strengthen collaboration and partnerships with local businesses and various levels of government to build programs, "hubs" or specialist cluster initiatives.
- Ensuring purchasing processes are inclusive of local businesses.
- ***What actions would further strengthen and increase the attractiveness of regional universities?***
- Additional research funding, particularly innovative research focused on improving learning and teaching in higher education (which is not addressed in current NPP guidelines).
- Additional funding to attract metro and International HRD students.
- Additional support for these cohorts.
- Additional courses that are traditionally only offered in metro areas.
- ***What policies would attract more metropolitan and international students to study at RRR areas, including regional universities and campuses?***
- Reduced HELP loan/ course fees for choosing regional study options.
- Scholarships to cover costs of the final term of study – an added incentive to remain at the university rather than transfer
- Sponsorship of school-age dependents of students to study at public schools
- Accommodation scholarships
- Providing internships/work placements both during studies and for six months after graduation
- Increasing work rights from 40 to 50 hours per fortnight for regional students
- Tax rebate for students who study in regional Australia and then commence work in regional Australia
- Increased options around permanent residency if studies are undertaken at a regional location, eg additional points for each year of qualification
- State Government sponsorship for one year of study at a regional university
- Student accommodation contracts with suppliers near campuses
- Transport concessions to travel to campuses
- Greater collaboration with tourism operators with opportunities to provide greater social and community integration activities/calendars.

Challenge F: Implementing and monitoring a national strategy

- ***Would there be value in establishing a National Regional Education Commissioner to oversee the Strategy and, if so, what should their role be?***
- This was a recommendation from the Halsey (2018) review, noting the Commissioner would chair an expert panel. This is a useful addition but the terms of reference should be open for public comment to ensure the role and responsibilities addresses the needs of the sector.
- ***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?***

- Success in this context could be measured by the number of RRR students who ATTEND and GRADUATE from tertiary study, with additional targets for Indigenous students and those experiencing the cumulative impacts of disadvantage.
- Success could also be measured by the increase in the numbers of graduates who live and work in the regions, post tertiary study and the extend to which universities contribution to the regional economy and to addressing gaps in occupations difficult to fill in RRR locations..

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 proposed measures outlined in this response are positioned from a strengths-based approach, while also acknowledging that people living in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia require additional supports to achieve more equitable outcomes in tertiary education.

These measures include:

- Improving telecommunications access, bandwidth, reliability and affordability in RRR locations and providing local tech support hubs to address technology related barriers to expanding online learning options.
- Increasing HEPPP funding specifically targeting RRR students and Indigenous Australians, regardless of socio-economic status, to address additional expenses, travel requirements and family and cultural responsibilities experienced by people in RRR Australia. The HEPPP funding cycles should be a minimum of three-five years to enable sufficient time for initiatives to have impact, given generational disadvantage takes years not months to address.
- Uncapping CGS funding for courses delivered in regional and remote areas or guaranteeing funding for courses for which there is a demonstrable demand from regional communities and industry to address skills gaps in the regions
- Providing funding support to enable RRR students to participate in residential schools, placements and practicums that covers travel, accommodation, living expenses, child care support where required and a compensation for lost income for those students who are working full-time or part-time.
- A renewed focus on the inequities still experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, particularly those in RRR areas, which continue to impact on the achievement of parity in access to and success in tertiary education.
- Dedicated funding support to target collaborative endeavours across regional universities to conduct outreach activities in schools and communities across RRR Australia.
- Further funding for RRR research, particularly allocated to innovative research that aims to provide evidence that leads to improved educational outcomes for RRR students.

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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.

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

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

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

Privacy policy and contact

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

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