



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*	Emeritus Professor
First name*	John
Last name*	Halsey
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 <input type="checkbox"/>
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please specify the organisation on whose behalf you are submitting

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

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

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.

RRR Education Commissioner

Raising and then maintaining high levels of achievement for all children and young people in regional, rural and remote Australia is both a necessary national priority and one that requires consistent dedication over many terms of governments.

As I wrote in my report into regional, rural and remote education, it is critically important to create an entity that *endures* and provides a high and influential level of impact on the challenges and opportunities of RRR education.

In relation to this, the appointment of a RRR Education Commissioner (RRREC) has very considerable merit and the role statement of the Rural Health Commissioner provides a very useful template re the essence of the role and the modus operandi of it, namely “**will work with regional, rural and remote communities, the health sector, universities, specialist training colleges and across all levels of government to improve rural health policies and champion the cause of rural practice**”.

A major and constant body of work relating to raising RRR achievements and opportunities is keeping the challenges and opportunities of RRR education in the foreground of policy and operations and the cut and thrust of public discussions and debate.

A way to do this would be to make the RRREC an ex officio member of the peak bodies which advise governments and key agencies such as ACARA and the key operational peak bodies such as the CEO's/Director Generals of Education of both the government and non-government sectors.

Both of these kinds of actions are essential because metropolitan/urban issues and challenges frequently dominate agendas and RRR is consequently shunted to a lower priority on the agenda. This is not always intentional- it is fundamentally a consequence of the fact that Australia as a whole is one of the most urbanised countries in the world.

As well I see the RRREC working closely with peak RRR parent, student and community bodies, universities and especially regional universities and TAFE/training bodies, as well as engaging in a strategic grounded/grass roots way to see and feel what is going on and what changes are required.

Philanthropy is another very important and potentially strategic partner re establishing an RRREC that has the wherewithal to make a real difference. I included a small but highly relevant section in my report on philanthropy and not just in terms of funding:

Succinctly, unlocking the full potential of philanthropy to contribute to raising the

achievements and opportunities of RRR students requires at least two things. Firstly, better understanding and information flows between government, philanthropy, schools and their communities. Secondly, the development of resources and 'hands on' advice to make the processes of applying for funding and support from philanthropy and the subsequent reporting and accountability as accessible and user friendly as possible (p.66).

One important aspect of raising achievements and post school opportunities for RRR students and communities more broadly is a visible and felt sense that there is hope and something meaningful and financially rewarding to do without necessarily having to rush off to the big smoke as one participant said to me during a meeting.

I see the RRREC playing a vital role here and working to progress the concept and role of anchor organisations in building sustainable futures, which I included in my report namely:

Anchor organisations are what their name implies—something solid and grounded, 'here for the long haul' with sufficient presence, respect, and openness to working in partnership with others to grow and sustain worthwhile futures for individuals and communities. In many locations throughout RRR Australia, the concept of anchor organisations could be explored as a way to create new and sustainable opportunities. The range of anchor type organisations in RRR locations is still quite extensive as already signalled: schools, regional universities and hubs, TAFE and other registered training organisations, regional development bodies, local businesses and industries, citizen interest groups, health services, philanthropy and others (p.50).

Measuring success/setting targets

Measuring success and setting targets are two of the mostly hotly contested issues in the field of education and training. Notwithstanding, it is very important that each is embraced in a strong (as compared to a weak/tokenistic) way to progress the opportunities and achievements of RRR students.

As I raised in my discussion paper and report, what ultimately gets to be measured (and by what means) and thereby highly valued in education, has pervasive consequences not only for students but also for the wider society.

And, while I have argued/continue to argue that high stakes assessments need to be more place and context informed and flexible, I also strongly advocate that a common/communal set of standards must provide the overall framing for measuring and determining targets. My reasoning here is that students and RRR students in particular must not be short changed as a consequence of their achievement/qualification only being recognised locally. The impacts, often of a negative kind of hierarchical domination are all too pervasive in our society and definitely do not need any further encouragement!

There was a quite widespread concern expressed to me during the review that what counts as valued knowledge and skills and therefore should be measured and reported publicly, is overly influenced by urban issues or metrocentricity. There needs to be greater RRR input

and push back into national curriculum and assessment in such ways that ruralness is given a higher presence in curriculum from pre-school through to post-graduate levels.

In relation to targets, there are three main groups that are especially significant in relation to raising achievements and opportunities via education and training. Before briefly elaborating on them, it is also critically important to recognise that the 'outside the school fence/outside the university campus' contexts which individuals and communities experience do have major and enduring consequences re achieving targets. Fully understanding this in policy development and operations should be a critical aspect of the role of a RRREC.

First, some means/input targets. There are 'obvious' ones like the quantum of funding per individual. But as I identified in my discussion paper and report, there are many others which impact on achievements and opportunities. They include:

- the number of experienced/top teachers in RRR schools and the duration of their appointments
- the number of 'top students' who opt into a teaching degree and opt for RRR teaching as their first priority
- the variability of ICT services irrespective of location
- the 'sense' of hopefulness and visible post schooling opportunities- I realise this sounds quite vague but it is worth reflecting on how much effort parents and individuals devote to getting into 'the right/best school; the top university course and what drives and underpins this
- distances to services- for example, imagine setting national targets that put a maximum distance students from pre- to post graduate levels have to travel to access learning and support services which their urban counterparts can/do take for granted
- increasing the presence of RRR in all teaching and learning at all levels
- a universal loans/funding scheme which seamlessly services both higher education and vocational training to facilitate better/new Uni-Voc Ed blended qualifications to meet new and emerging industries and careers

Second, some throughput targets such as:

- the number and quality of professional development activities undertaken and successfully completed to drive up achievements and opportunities
- participation and attendance
- learning continuity- in some RRR locations, intermittent ICT is an issue; there is also the matter of huge waiting lists and delays for specialist assessments re specific learning needs and very high rates of teacher turnover in some locations
- in relation to undergraduate and training, at least some guidelines for a productive blend of face to face and distance learning modes

Third, outcomes targets like:

- parity of achievements between RRR and urban students (preschool to year 12) by

2030- why a decade or more? Fundamentally the time it will take to shift the mix of resources that actually make a measurable difference and then allowing them time to have an impact

- 50% of all teacher education degree students take a high quality extended placement, say a term or longer, in schools and communities beyond the metropolitan areas
- all RRR students who gain a bona fide offer from a university or recognised training institution are able to commence immediately following school completion
- no more than a 5% difference between RRR students and urban/metropolitan students re first degree completions and Certificate 4 or equivalent

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.

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Three kinds of targets are needed to progress RRR achievements and opportunities- input, throughput and output.

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.

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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