



Australian Government  
Department of Education

# Briefing Session

## 2024 Regional University Study Hubs Program

### Application Round

28/29 August 2024



# 1. Program Overview



# What are Regional University Study Hubs?

Regional University Study Hubs (Regional Hubs, formerly Regional University Centres) are facilities that support regional and remote students to undertake tertiary studies whilst remaining in their local community.

Regional Hubs provide:

- IT Infrastructure
- Study spaces
- Student support services
- Academic skills support
- A network of like-minded peers
- Other campus-style facilities



*Great Southern Universities Centre, Western Australia*

Regional Hubs are **driven by the local community** to respond to local needs.

# Program Objectives

- Enable students in regional and remote Australia to **access** and **complete** higher education without having to leave their community
- Meet a demonstrated gap in **support** for study in a regional or remote community
- Support students who wish to **stay** in their community while they complete their studies
- Enhance the **experience** of students studying within their own community
- Drive **strong links** between the Regional University Study Hubs and other organisations in the area, including other support services that students may access and industry/employers
- **Complement**, rather than replace, existing and planned university investments and activities in regional and remote areas, such as satellite campuses and study centres.



## Program Objectives (cont.)

- Each Regional University Study Hub reflects the community it serves and is established with consideration of the:
  - Geographic location of the Regional University Study Hub in relation to the community
  - Population size, demographic and cultural needs of the local community
  - Existing higher education external (online) study and other tertiary level study, and the level of community interest in this
  - The skills required by local industry and business in the area
  - Location of other education providers including local TAFE and VET providers.



# Program History

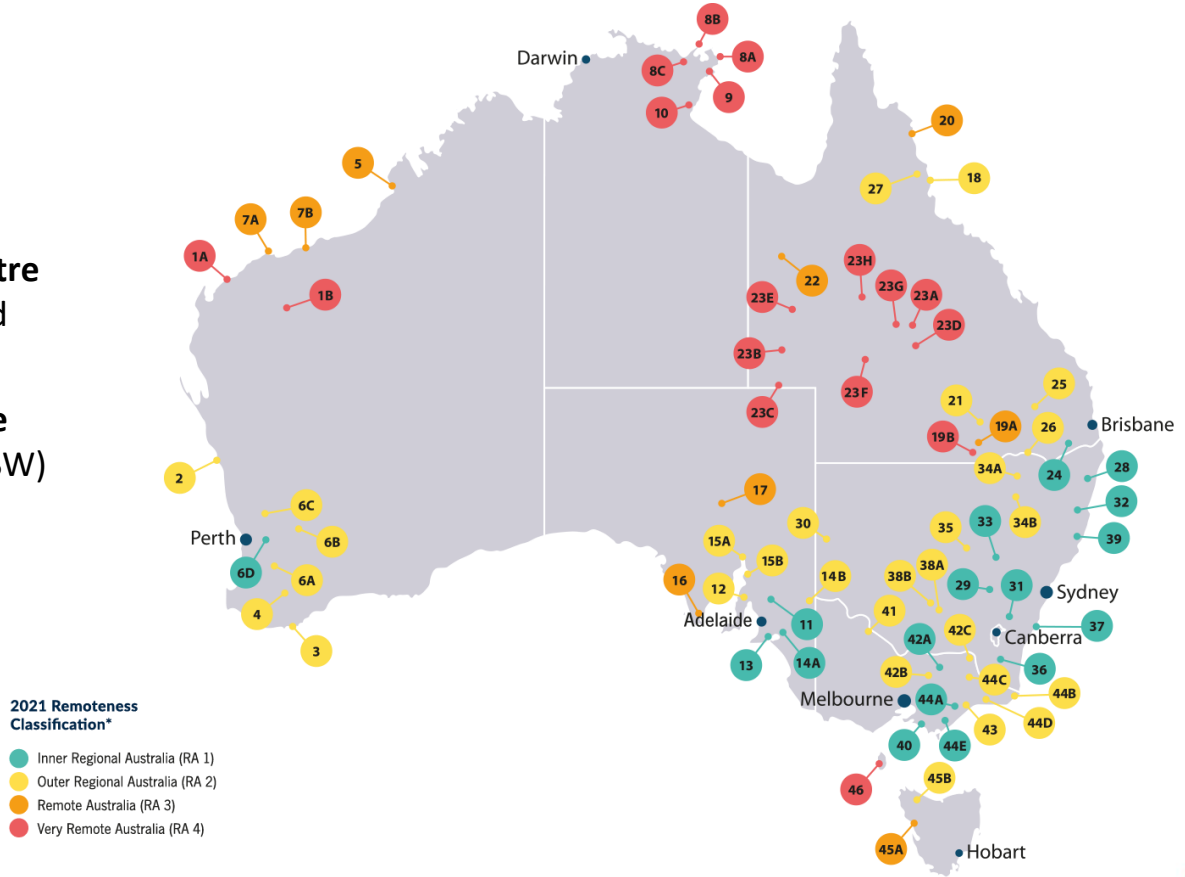
- The Regional University Study Hubs Program has been operating since 2018, with 46 Regional Hubs currently operating or establishing across all States and the Northern Territory.
- The Program was established in response to the 2016 Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee Senate Report on the Future Role and Contribution of Regional Capitals to Australia
- The program was strengthened by:
  - 2018 Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (the Halsey Review)
  - 2019 National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy (Napthine Review)



# Existing Regional University Study Hubs

Two Hubs pre-date the Commonwealth program and helped inspire it:

- **Geraldton Universities Centre** (Geraldton, WA) established 2001
- **Country Universities Centre Snowy Monaro** (Cooma, NSW) established 2013

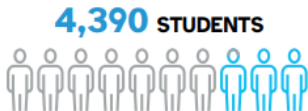




Australian Government  
Department of Education

# Regional University Study Hubs Key Facts

April/May 2024



are supported by Regional University Study Hubs, a **29% increase in the past year.**

12,836 STUDENTS

have been supported by Regional University Study Hubs since the program's establishment.

## Regional University Study Hubs

42%

of students supported by Regional Hubs identify as **First in Family to undertake tertiary education**

75%

of students supported by Regional Hubs identify as **Female**

11%

of students supported by Regional Hubs identify as **First Nations**

56%

of students supported by Regional Hubs **are over the age of 25**

93%



of students supported by Regional University Study Hubs **reported positively about the quality of their experience** when asked as part of a 2021 Program Evaluation.



70%

of students supported by Regional Hubs study courses at the **Bachelor level or above**

The **most popular fields of education** among students supported by Regional Hubs are:



Health  
(35%)



Education  
(18%)



Society and Culture  
(15%)

More information about the Regional University Study Hubs Program can be found at [www.education.gov.au/regional-university-study-hubs](http://www.education.gov.au/regional-university-study-hubs).

For questions or inquiries, please contact us at [regional@education.gov.au](mailto:regional@education.gov.au)



# Current Regional Hubs – models and demographics

- Regional Hubs are required to provide services that include (but not limited to) - raising awareness through outreach with school students and the community, providing general academic, administrative and wellbeing support, pastoral care, orientation, library services and assisting students to gain local employment where relevant.
- There are various ‘models’ of Regional Hubs, based on the needs of the local community, e.g:
  - *General support model* – student centred approach that provides general academic skills and other support for student studying any course through any tertiary provider
  - *Supported course or ‘Mini campus’ model* – greater focus on supported courses/supported units, delivered in partnership with particular universities
    - Note – these models also provide general support to any student.
- Regional Hubs are generally located in low population areas with thin markets for university provision and no or very limited university access.
- For areas with an existing Regional University Study Hub, the median population is approx. 5,500. The mean is around 8,000.



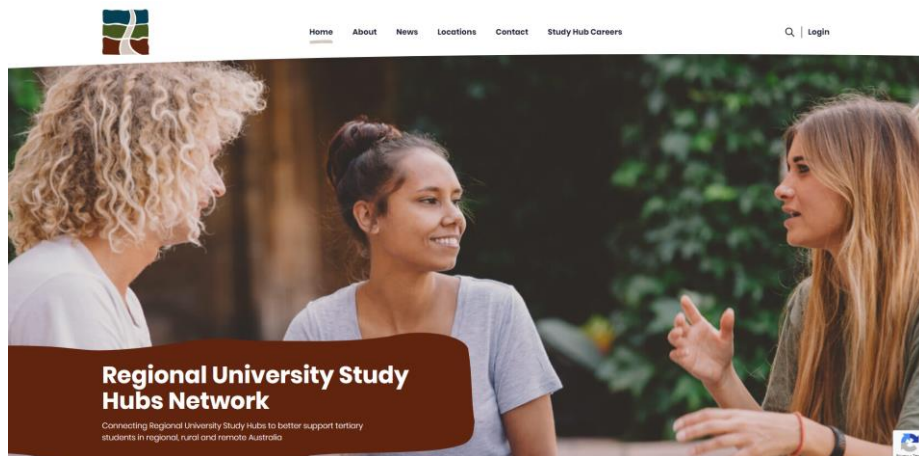
# Partnerships

- A key part of the Regional University Study Hubs program is partnerships.
  - Universities, VET providers, secondary schools, local industry etc.
- Universities have played a significant role in the program to date – through both formal and informal partnerships with a range of financial commitments and collaborative arrangements.
- Universities are encouraged to actively engage with community organisations to discuss how they can be involved with a Regional Hub.
- All applicants are encouraged to collaborate with a range of partners to ensure the proposed Hub will address the needs of local students and the community.



# Regional University Study Hubs Network

- A Network has been established to support Regional University Study Hub staff across Australia and foster collaboration through a community of practice.
- The Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (ACSES) administers the Network. Its activities are informed by the needs of Hub staff and guided by the Network Advisory Committee
- New Hubs established through this application round will have access to Network resources and support.
- More information is available at [www.regionaluniversitystudyhubsnetwork.edu.au](http://www.regionaluniversitystudyhubsnetwork.edu.au)



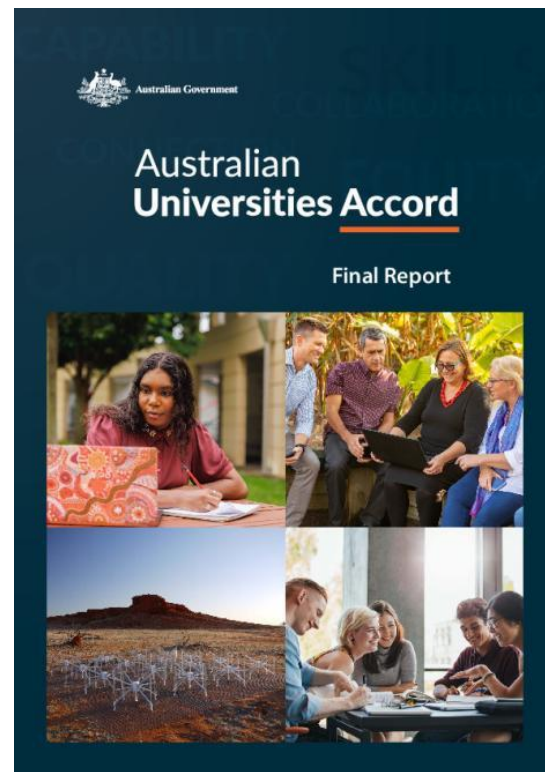
# Expanding the Regional University Study Hubs Program

- The Australian Universities Accord Panel delivered an Interim Report in July 2023, which set out five Priority Actions for government.
- The first Priority Action is to extend visible, local access to tertiary education by creating further Regional University Study Hubs and establishing a similar concept for suburban/metropolitan locations.
- In response to the Interim Report, the Government announced \$66.9 million in funding to double the number of University Study Hubs across Australia. This will see the establishment of up to 20 additional Regional University Study Hubs across two streams:
  - Stream 1 (Cohort 4) – On 25 March 2024, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, announced 12 Regional University Study Hubs funded in response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, including funding to support two existing Country Universities Centres in NSW.
  - Stream 2 (Cohort 5) – up to 10 Regional University Study Hubs through this application round.



# Regional University Study Hubs and the Accord – Final Report


- On 25 February 2024, the **Accord Final Report** was released.
- **Recommendation 39.C.** is to “consider **further expanding** the successful Regional University Study Hubs program – following evaluation of its effectiveness in improving regional and remote student participation, retention and completion rates. This expansion could consider:
  - i. Increased use of existing tertiary education infrastructure like TAFEs
  - ii. Allowing eligibility for existing universities to host a Regional University Study Hub
  - iii. Changing the name of the program from Regional University Study Hubs to Regional Study Hubs to recognise their role across both VET and higher education.




## 2. 2024 Application Round



# Overview

- The 2024 application round will support establishment of **up to 10** new Regional University Study Hubs.
  - Applicants are required to submit an application as per the requirements of the Application Guide and using the templates provided on the department's website.
  - Following the submission of applications, an Assessment Panel will review applications and assess them against the defined criteria. The Assessment Panel will agree final rankings of applications.
  - The department will make recommendations to the Minister for Education, who will make the final decision and announce successful applicants.
- 

# Eligibility criteria

- Applicants must demonstrate they are a **community-owned and/or community-based** organisation.
  - Organisations must be, or be able to become, a **body corporate**.
  - For this round, as a trial, **universities are eligible to apply** to establish and operate a hub, subject to meeting all eligibility criteria in the Application Guide.
  - Proposed Hubs must be in a **regional or remote location**, as defined by the Australian Statistical Geography Standard Remoteness Areas.
  - Funding is available for **new hubs only** – existing facilities providing similar or equivalent services are ineligible for funding under this round.
- 




## Regional University Study Hubs operated by universities

- As part of this application round, eligibility has been extended to universities to apply to establish and operate a Regional Hub.
- University applicants must meet all eligibility criteria in the Application Guide, including the two core components of the program:
  - Provider agnostic (supports students from any tertiary provider)
  - Community-embedded and driven by the needs of the local community.
- University applicants must establish a board or steering committee for the Hub, which includes members from the community.



## New Hubs only

- To ensure Hubs are established in areas with the highest need, funding is only available for new Hubs.
  - Existing facilities that are already operating and providing similar or equivalent services are ineligible to apply.
  - Existing Regional University Study Hubs can apply for funding for **new offerings**, for example a satellite site or hub-spoke location.
  - To be considered a similar or existing facility, you need to meet
    - i. some, or all, of the facilities described as infrastructure; and
    - ii. some, or all, of the services listed in administrative and academic skills support and/or student support services.
  - If your organisation currently provides only one of the above, you meet the 'new hub' criteria.
- 

## Priority – upskilling and reskilling

- For this round, an area of priority for consideration in the assessment process will be applications with a focus on **upskilling and reskilling local workforces** to prepare for the future needs of the community.
- This aligns with broader Government priorities, including the Transition to NetZero and a Future Made in Australia.
- This will be just one consideration of the Assessment Panel, alongside all other assessment criteria.



# Clarification discussions

- Some applicants may be requested to clarify/verify claims made in their application to help the Assessment Panel.
  - This may involve a brief clarification discussion using Microsoft Teams
- These discussions are not an opportunity to expand on an application beyond what was included in the written submission.
- All information relevant to the proposed Regional University Study Hub should be provided in the written application.
- Discussions will be at the discretion of the Assessment Panel.
- **Discussions are not a requirement to be found suitable for funding.** Their purpose is purely to clarify and verify.




# Regional Needs Model

- A Regional Needs Model was developed in 2021 as part of a Scoping Study to assist in identifying potential regions for new Regional University Study Hubs, based on need and likelihood of success. The model has been updated in 2024 with latest available data.
- The model does not preclude any region from being eligible for funding. The Assessment Panel will make its own assessment of need and readiness for a Hub based on all the available information, including the Regional Needs Model.
- For applicants wishing to access updated data for their region, the relevant Dashboard can be made available on request to the Regional University Study Hubs Team – please contact [regional@education.gov.au](mailto:regional@education.gov.au)



# Funding

- The department has undertaken analysis of existing Regional University Study Hubs and determined the median annual Commonwealth Grant funding for operating costs is \$309,620.
    - It should be noted that the actual median annual operating cost is anticipated to be somewhat higher than this, with additional funds coming from other income sources. More information can be found in the Application Guide.
  - It is expected that applications including Capital Works will have additional costs in the first year of funding to undertake those works. Such applications will be assessed accordingly.
  - Exact funding amounts will be dependent on the needs/circumstances of each application, with final amounts **subject to negotiation with the department.**
- 

# How to apply

- Please read the Application Guide before you commence.
- Complete an application including:
  - Application Form
  - Budget Proposal
  - Financial and Credentials Information Form
- Applications must be submitted via the link provided on the department's website by:

**5:00pm (AEDT) 18 October 2024**



# Support for developing your application

## FAQs

- The department has developed responses to a range of frequently asked questions. These are available on our website.
- The department will update the FAQs as needed throughout the round to ensure fair and equitable access to information.

## Data

- Higher Education Data can be obtained from [www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data](http://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data)
- You can request higher education data by postcode from the department, noting there is a cost associated with this. Please see the FAQs for more information.
- You can be provided with your regions Regional Needs Model Dashboard for free by the Regional University Study Hubs Team on request.

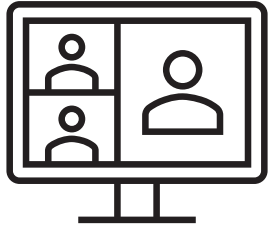
## Existing Regional Hubs and the Network

- You are encouraged to seek information about existing Regional Hubs. Please see the Department's website and the Regional University Study Hubs Network website.





# Upcoming Webinar



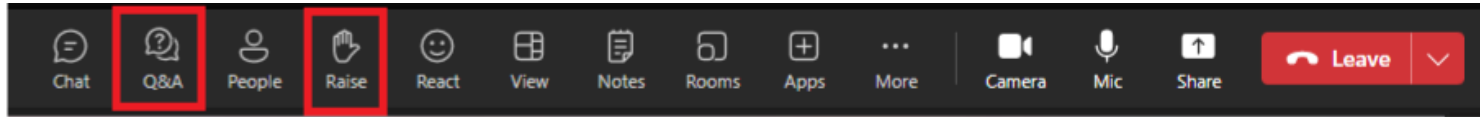
- The department will host a webinar on **Monday 9 September** for some existing Regional University Study Hubs to share insights into their day-to-day operations.
- This will be a great opportunity to hear how the Hubs function ‘on the ground’ and will support you to further shape the design of your proposed Hub.
- The department will provide further details for the webinar shortly.



# Questions?

Use the Q&A function to write a question or raise your hand to ask a question.

- You are able to turn on your own microphone (and camera if desired).



Questions and answers will also be added to the FAQs on the department's website.

For any additional questions not answered today, please contact [regional@education.gov.au](mailto:regional@education.gov.au)