Expert review of rural, regional and remote education and training

January 2019

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Overview

This short literature review and annotated bibliography is based on NCVER's experience in undertaking and managing research and national VET data collections and their associated statistical standards for Australia's VET sector.

Context

NCVER is the official collection agency for national VET statistics. As the trusted data custodian, NCVER collects this information under the authority of ministers responsible for education and training and the registration requirements legislated for training providers.

About NCVER

NCVER is an independent, not-for-profit company owned by the Australian Government and state and territory government ministers responsible for vocational education and training (VET). NCVER collects, manages, analyses and communicates research and statistics about VET. NCVER's vision is to transform national understanding of VET.

In addition, NCVER undertakes a strategic program of research and evaluation through our in-house research program, and research guided by the Australian and State and Territory governments. NCVER also publishes and communicates the results of its extensive research effort. For almost 35 years, NCVER has been providing information to a wide range of stakeholders within both government and non-government sectors.

The importance of VET in rural, regional and remote Australia

Vocational education and training provides an important pathway into work for people in regional, rural and remote Australia, however there has been a decline in participation over the last three years according to the latest data on Total VET Activity – see table 1 (NCVER 2018a).

Table 1   Estimated total VET student characteristics (remoteness), 2015-17

Student characteristics	2015	2016	2017		2016–17
	('000)	('000)	('000)	%	% change
Student remoteness region					
Major cities	2 363.2	2 465.3	2 509.6	59.2	1.8
Inner regional	790.6	811.2	806.7	19.0	-0.6
Outer regional	408.3	405.7	395.3	9.3	-2.6
Remote	74.8	72.4	69.1	1.6	-4.7
Very remote	44.6	42.9	40.5	1.0	-5.6
Overseas	165.3	169.5	180.6	4.3	6.5
Not known	163.6	240.6	233.8	5.5	-2.8

Source: NCVER, 2018a, Total VET Activity

The reasons for this are not entirely clear and may relate to a range of factors including declining populations particularly in remote and very remote communities brought about especially by young people relocating to centres with greater training and employment opportunity, changes in contestable funding by State and Territory governments, 'thin training markets' and increased cost of participation in VET for many students (Perlgut, 2018a).

The Student Outcomes Survey (NCVERb, 2019), indicates good outcomes in terms of post-training further education or employment outcomes and satisfaction for those that do participate in VET. For example, according to the latest VET student outcomes survey data, about 91% of VET graduates surveyed in 2018 from remote or very remote regions are in work or further education after completion of their training. This is higher than for their city counterparts. Of these, around 87% are in work and nearly 90% achieved their main reason for doing the training – see table 2. The figures for subject only completers are even higher with the exception of 'improved employment after training' –recognising that most subject completers are employed at the time of undertaking their study and are often upskilling – see table 3.

Table 2   Outcomes and satisfaction for graduates, by student characteristics (remoteness), 2018 (%)

	Employed after training	Improved employment status after training	Employed or in further study	Achieved their main reason for doing the training	Satisfied with the overall quality of training
Student remoteness (ARIA+) region					
Major cities	75.6	58.1	84.1	83.7	86.6
Inner and outer regional	80.4	60.9	87.7	84.9	87.1
Remote and very remote	87.2	65.1	91.2	89.3	89.3

Source: NCVER, 2018, Student Outcomes Survey 2018 – Summary Findings

Table 3   Outcomes and satisfaction for subject completers, by student characteristics (remoteness), 2018 (%)

	Employed after training	Improved employment status after training	Employed or in further study	Achieved their main reason for doing the training	Satisfied with the overall quality of training
Student remoteness (ARIA+) region					
Major cities	84.0	46.5	86.0	90.0	90.1
Inner and outer regional	86.5	44.3	88.2	91.7	90.6
Remote and very remote	91.5	48.7	92.2	94.7	91.2

Source: NCVER, 2018, Student Outcomes Survey 2018 – Summary Findings, Adelaide, NCVER

The research suggests in part that education providers play an important role in rural and remote communities that extends beyond the simple delivery of education and training, and given they operate in community settings with often unique local employment needs have often developed sound linkages and relationships with local employers and bodies which might explain some of high degree of student satisfaction with their providers and their improvement in employment status (Halsey, 2018, Perlgut, 2018b).

High-performing (non-metropolitan) regions facing macroeconomic challenges were characterized by a responsive VET sector and a shared understanding across providers, along with a strong connection to local communities and their needs. Providers in successful regions have 'wellbeing strategies' to support learners beyond their training; and engagement with local community appears to be a fundamental principle for making VET training work better (Lamb et al, 2018).

Aspirations, access and the role of training providers

There are a range of factors that can affect people in rural, regional and remote areas in their participation in training. For example, the cost and availability of transport and accommodation for students in regional areas can be a barrier to attending events and activities away from home. Also, the likelihood of providers attending, for example, schools in remote locations to give presentations on training and education options is also lower (Victorian Parliament, 2018).

The research indicates that many successful training providers have adopted a range of strategies to maximise engagement and retention in training, including:

- using community member programs and engaging in community partnerships among schools, industry, vocational, and higher education sectors

- co-locating education and training with other community services

- delivering programs in community settings including using local industry and reducing unnecessary block release

- tailoring programs specifically for learners with low skills

- building relationships with local employers to help learners gain work experience, and

- providing intensive course and career guidance.

The latter around career guidance is particularly important as many students are unclear about VET and Higher Education opportunities, especially based on out-dated rather than contemporary portrayals of the sector and are unclear about the pathways to VET-related occupations, despite career activities in schools which include VET-focused activities. This misalignment of educational and occupational aspirations and confusion about VET indicates that many students lack clear and accurate information about the VET sector to inform decision making (Gore et al, 2017).

And this is again important and some of the research indicates that compared with their metropolitan counterparts, some young people in regional areas have lower career aspirations, which can be strongly influenced by the views and expectations of their families and the wider community – so information is important. Curtis et al (2012) difference in the participation rates of metropolitan and rural students in higher education (44.0% and 34.2% respectively), we find that this difference is explained largely by the lower socioeconomic status of rural compared with metropolitan students, their lower aspirations for post-school study and some related demographic characteristics, especially being of Australian rather than immigrant backgrounds.

The available research reinforces the importance of coordinating effort in the regions to improve and maximise transitions through expanded accessibility to information on educational options, especially VET into Higher Education, and to significantly increase the number of people with industry experience working closely with schools and their staff and to more generally develop and promote regional strategies involving TAFE for example and other providers (Escalier McLean Consulting, 2017).

And in relation to the learner themselves, a range of factors have been identified that contribute to higher retention and better outcomes for students in regional and remote areas, and in particular indigenous learners, including:

- trainer qualities
- training coordination and support (wrap-around services)
- addressing the cost and availability of transport and accommodation for students in regional and remote areas to training opportunities
- establishing strong community connections
- ensuring options and pathways into further education and employment available in the region as a frustration for many students is the need to travel to larger population centres to continue their education (Geunther et al, 2017)

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Bibliography - Regional, rural, remote VET

January 2019

TOPIC

VET research/evidence into regional and remote VET addressing the Terms of Reference for the Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education.

The Terms of Reference are:

- build on the work of the *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* and investigate the need for a commissioner to oversee the implementation of the Strategy
- identify strategies and policies for the Australian Government to put in place to bring the attainment rate of regional, rural and remote students to parity with students from metropolitan areas
- examine the literature and research on aspiration, access and success for regional students and the barriers to access to tertiary education facing people in regional Australia
- leverage research undertaken on the provision of tertiary education in regional Australia and the support services provided to regional, rural and remote students at university
- consider the current policy options supported by the Government, including student income support as well as the opportunities presented by the Regional Study Hubs Program
- recommend how current and potential new approaches should be best combined as a coherent suite of policy responses to address issues particular to a region, to deliver improved higher education outcomes to students in regional, rural and remote Australia
- recommend a target for regional, rural and remote education outcomes.
- advise the Government on the ongoing education and training needs of regional, rural and remote communities

SOURCES USED: VOCEDplus AND NCVER portal

DATE RANGE: 2015-2019

NOT INCLUDED: NCVER's statistical resources or No-Frills conference papers; research relating to higher ed.

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NCVER's work – Current and recent

Foundation skills in regional areas project (new Research Working Group Project)

Author: Lisel O'Dwyer, Mandy Mihelic and Ian White, 2019

This project aims to characterise good practice in the provision of enabling and foundation skills courses and how these practices contribute to building human and social capital in regional and rural areas. The focus is on the delivery of core LLN skills (with attention also to employability skills) and vocational training supporting community economic development, by all types of providers. The project asks the following questions:

- What works in the delivery of foundations skill courses in regional and rural areas?
- What models or approaches are most effective?
- Is there a relationship between delivery models and types of communities and places?
- Apart from direct funding, what other policy settings influence delivery? (e.g. health programs/hospitals, housing support, employment/economic development, location of government operations or services (e.g.

defence, correctional services, aged care, carer support), volunteer-based services, childcare, disability support)

- Who (which provider types and size) is delivering foundation skills courses in regional and rural Australia and how do they vary between different communities and places?
- How does successful completion of foundation skills courses delivered by all provider types influence the development of human and social capital within a community and place?

Improving participation and success in VET for disadvantaged learners

Authors: Lamb, Stephen; Maire, Quentin; Walstab, Anne; Newman, Graeme; Doecke, Esther; Davies, Merryn Date published: **2018**

Why do some regions perform better with disadvantaged learners than others? Identified through the analysis of a number of data sources, this research explores the strategies and practices in place at TAFE, private and community education providers who achieve high participation and completion rates with disadvantaged learners. A survey of registered training organisations and case studies found that the most successful strategies were focused around supporting disadvantaged learners needs to be an institutional-wide commitment, building strong relationships with employers and other service agencies within the community and customising the support to the individual.

https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/improving-participation-and-success-in-vet-for-disadvantaged-learners [Supporting documents include regional analysis]

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- The study identified 13 regions across Australia where disadvantaged learners had high levels of participation and completion. Many of these high-performing areas were in rural or regional locations.

- High-performing regions were characterised by a responsive VET sector and a shared understanding across providers, along with a strong connection to local communities and their needs. Providers in successful regions have 'wellbeing strategies' to support learners beyond their training; engagement with local community appears to be a fundamental principle for making VET training work better

- Economic poverty is sometimes more pronounced in rural and regional areas by comparison with urban areas (National Rural Health Alliance and ACOSS 2013).

- Rural and remote learners in Australia typically have reduced access to educational services, more frequently leave school before completing Year 12, are less likely to attend university and more likely to drop out (Lamb et al. 2015).

- Many of the top-performing regions face similar macroeconomic challenges, for example, challenges associated with the residual effects of the downside of the mining boom. Individuals previously commanding significant salaries in low-skill work in mining or construction were unemployed and not well-placed for future training pathways and careers in the post-boom environment.

- Some courses/curriculum can't be easily amended/altered for flexible delivery in remote regions.

Policy snapshot: Indigenous training and employment

Date published: **2017**

Author: Windley, Georgina

This policy snapshot provides information and insight into the recent trends in national Indigenous employment and training programs. The snapshot sets the scene for the research reports, 'Indigenous VET participation, completion and outcomes' (Windley 2017) and 'Enhancing training advantage for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners' (Guenther et al. 2017).

https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/policy-snapshot-indigenous-training-and-employment

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program was a 30-year (1977-2015) publicly funded employment program that addressed labour market disadvantage and the lack of local employment opportunities in rural and remote areas.

- The current program Community Development Program (CDP) was introduced in 2015 specifically for remote areas.

- Much of the current policy agenda has been adopted from the recent Forrest Review recommendations. Forrest is critical of 'training for training's sake'. Forrest's recommendation for improving vocational training for Indigenous Australians is a demand-driven voucher system, where funding for training (qualifications and skill sets) is tied to the individual based on need.

- The overarching focus of national Indigenous training and employment policy is that training needs to be linked to real jobs. In remote communities that have unique and limited labour markets and challenges associated with their remoteness, training needs to be aligned with local needs and employment opportunities.

Enhancing training advantage for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners

Authors: Guenther, John; Bat, Melodie; Stephens, Anne; Skewes, Janet; Boughton, Bob; Williamson, Frances; Wooltorton, Sandra; Marshall, Mel; Dwyer, Anna

Date published: **2017**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in very remote parts of Australia are increasingly participating in vocational education and training (VET); however, completion rates remain low and employment outcomes are not improving. This project identifies how retention and completion can be improved and what other indicators of success are important outcomes of training in remote communities.

Using a case study approach to investigate five unique training programs in remote areas of Australia, the report finds a that range of factors contribute to retention, including: trainer qualities and characteristics of delivery; family, personal, community and cultural factors; training coordination and support; supportive relationships with other students; local community ownership of training; and training that is connected to culture and local knowledge.

https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/enhancing-training-advantage-for-remote-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-learners

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- Unemployment rates in rural and remote communities remain higher than the national average. Therefore, the success of the training must be considered in terms beyond employment outcomes

- Learning English and being numerate are important for remote adult learners, who often speak English as a second language.

- About one-third of the very remote workforce has no qualifications and no more than Year 10 school attainment (Guenther 2013). It has been suggested that the failure of training to transition people to employment is because of the siloed nature of service delivery, the lack of collaboration between service providers and the general lack of support available to remote communities. But research conducted by the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation does not support this view.

Indigenous VET participation, completion and outcomes: change over the past decade

Author: Georgina Windley

Date published: **2017**

This report examines, and provides a clearer picture of, how Indigenous participation in vocational education and training (VET) and outcomes have changed over the last decade. Drawing on data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research's (NCVER) National VET Provider Collection, National Apprentice and Trainee Collection and Student Outcomes Survey, this report focuses on Indigenous participation and completion in VET (including apprenticeships and traineeships), as well as on the employment, further study and personal outcomes of training. It identifies high-level trends in VET participation (including location and specific student and training characteristics), how completion rates vary, where employment outcomes are strongest, and the extent to which further study is being undertaken.

https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/indigenous-vet-participation-completion-and-outcomes-change-over-the-past-decade

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- For Indigenous people in remote and very remote areas, lower-level qualifications still make up the majority of enrolments

- TAFEs are more likely to provide training in remote areas. Schools appear to be less engaged in VET provision in remote and very remote areas compared with the other regions, but universities play a greater role in remote and very remote areas, largely due to the presence of Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory, where university provision of VET makes up 32.7 per cent

- Completion rates for the Indigenous population are considerably lower for very remote areas compared with other areas, and certificate I qualifications compared with other qualifications

- Program completion is an issue among Indigenous VET students, particularly those from remote and very remote areas.

- Indigenous VET graduates from remote areas are more likely to be employed after training than those from cities and regional areas, but they are also more likely to be employed before training. This raises questions about the role of VET in meeting the needs of these unique labour markets and the impact of various employment service programs and related training in these remote areas.

- VET program completion rates are particularly low for Indigenous students in very remote areas (particularly those jurisdictions with a higher proportion of students in very remote areas) and those undertaking certificate I level qualifications.

VET retention in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Author: NCVER

Date published: 2017

This good practice guide is based on the research project 'Enhancing training advantage for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners' by John Guenther et al. on behalf of Ninti One Limited. The work examines five unique vocational education and training (VET) programs in remote areas and identifies how retention and completion can be improved and what other indicators of success are important outcomes of training in remote communities. This good practice guides synthesises the findings of the five case studies and looks at the factors that are important in enabling retention and ensuring good practice.

https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/vet-retention-in-remote-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- Supportive families and communities can contribute to higher retention and completion. Trainers/providers can play a role in actively encouraging this family and community support.

- Positive, supportive and respectful trainers are necessary for helping students stay on track to complete their studies. Trainers need to facilitate communication between themselves, students and employers, listen to their students and provide administrative and advocacy support to students where required.

- Student peer relationships are important for creating a supportive learning environment, and trainers have a role in fostering this collegial learning environment.

- Local community ownership, along with cultural and local knowledge embedded in training programs, is vital for adding value and enhancing engagement in education and training, as well as strengthening the link between education and training and relevant local employment opportunities

Other research

Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools

Author: Victoria. Parliament. Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee

Date published: **2018**

The terms of reference asked the Committee to investigate how well school career development is meeting the needs of Victorian students and how it could be improved. The Committee was also asked to consider the specific needs of regional students and during the course of the inquiry, the Committee also chose to explore the career development needs of students facing disadvantage.

https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/eejsc/inquiries/article/3883 [Chapter 4 of the report addresses career development needs of regional students]

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- The cost and availability of transport and accommodation for students in regional Victoria can be a barrier to attending events and activities away from home. Likelihood of providers attending schools in remote locations to give presentations is also low.

- Career practitioners in regional schools find it difficult to undertake professional development due to the required travel time and transport and accommodation costs.

- The expense and loss of support networks associated with relocation can discourage regional students from taking up higher education opportunities away from home and can have a significant impact on their career choices

- Regional schools and industry are not relaying the diversity of local employment opportunities available to young people resulting in a lack of awareness of these opportunities among students, parents and the wider community.

- Due to smaller economies and populations in regional areas, young people have fewer education options and less access to career development events and opportunities.

- Students in regional Victoria often struggle to secure work experience placements in their region and can find it challenging to secure placements and accommodation outside their region.

- Compared with their metropolitan counterparts, some young people in regional areas have lower career aspirations, which can be strongly influenced by the views and expectations of their families and the wider community.

- Less exposure to a wide range of occupations and industries can limit the aspirations of regional students and influence their career choices. Mentoring programs that provide regional students with experiences in larger urban centres can inspire young people to develop higher career aspirations.

- Recommendations:

  - that the Department of Education and Training establish a career development fund for regional students from low-income families to cover the costs of attending career development events or activities outside their region.

  - that the Department of Education and Training establish a professional development fund for regional school career practitioners to cover the costs of attending professional development courses and events outside their region.

  - that the Department of Education and Training support the Career Education Association of Victoria to provide a greater range of professional development courses and seminars online to improve access in regional areas

  - that regional school career practitioners highlight the career opportunities available in local industries to students and their parents, so they can make more informed career decisions.

- that the Victorian Government support current and future mentoring programs for regional students to assist their transition from school to higher education or employment.

- that the Department of Education and Training continue funding for the Rural Inspire program through the Common Funding Agreement with the Country Education Partnership.

Review of the future of vocational education, training and skilling in central-western Queensland [Coaldrake Review]

Author: Coaldrake, Peter

Date published: **2018**

The Queensland Government commissioned Emeritus Professor Peter Coaldrake to review vocational education, training and skilling in central-western Queensland. The review considered the performance of two colleges - Longreach Pastoral College (LPC) and Emerald Agricultural College (EAC) - operating under the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC). The objective of this Review is 'to make recommendations on how to grow the education, training and skills sector, in central western Queensland, including through leveraging existing educational offerings and facilities, to help boost economic growth and regional resilience'. The review recommended that the two colleges, LPC and EAC, cease to exist.

https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/coaldrake-review/resource/ae7e15bf-4041-4651-a711-c8fc114eb089

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- The model of residential-based agricultural education, as provided for by the Longreach Pastoral College (LPC) and the Emerald Agricultural College (EAC), is under threat everywhere, and is clearly unsustainable in central western Queensland. Nor is there any prospect that the model – which was established in the central west forty years ago – can be resurrected in the future.

- New jobs and even new industries are emerging in the agricultural and pastoral sectors and across the rural and regional economy. There is therefore a major need for education and training in the future to help build and sustain a range of industry sectors in both the central west and the central highlands. This is demonstrated by the rise over the last decade in particular of new training providers. These include though are not confined to not-for-profit organisations which are seeking to meet the needs of the education and training market, including through the flexible delivery of tailored offerings.

- Areas of opportunity include tourism and hospitality, civil construction and maintenance, health and community care, business management, IT literacy, solar farming, drone/robotic/GPS technologies for the agricultural, pastoral and mining sectors, farm aviation, water management, new techniques in farm management, new agribusiness opportunities and digital extension services. Many of these training opportunities are at Certificate level and relevant to those in the later school years and young adults, as well to adults requiring or seeking retraining as a result of their changing professional interests, wishing to re-enter the workforce or previous employment disruption.

The role of New South Wales community education providers in regional and rural economic development

Author: Community Colleges Australia (CCA)

Date published: **2018**

This report examines the capacity of New South Wales (NSW) community education providers to contribute to regional and rural economic development. NSW regional and rural community education providers - an active network of 26 not-for-profit organisations - constitute a major economic development resource that has been under-utilised by the NSW State, Commonwealth and local governments, and not incorporated into economic development strategies or planning. This report aims to ensure that the NSW Government can use this community capacity, supporting economic development and providing new program models. The report expands on CCA's February 2017 paper, 'The role of community education in Australian regional and rural economic development'.

https://cca.edu.au/home/nsw-regional-and-rural-economic-development-report-summary/

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- VET is an essential part of Australia's regional economic development. Because of the economic and business structure of most regional and rural areas, VET is usually seen as more relevant to future careers, more actively undertaken (50 per cent higher than in cities) and has a greater economic impact than in metropolitan areas.

- NSW community education providers are heavily represented in the provision of VET outside of Sydney. To increase the ability of community education providers to participate in economic development, the most important changes are: reductions in barriers to participate in government-funded projects; encouragement of multi-sector regional economic development planning activities to include the not-for-profit community education providers; and increasing the capacity of community education providers themselves to participate effectively in economic development.

- The NSW Department of Industry is well-positioned to bring together VET and regional economic development activities. CCA encourages stronger organisational linkages between the two functions, which will assist economic development participation.

- New regional opportunities for the sector exist in the training of older workers – who are over-represented and under-utilised in many regional locations

- Among the recommendations in the report is for **NCVER** to develop an additional set of yearly reports that track student and provider outcomes in regional, rural and remote areas, by states and territories; include the regional economic development role of VET to the priorities of its national research program; and ensure that community education VET providers are a priority for research outcomes.

The role of community education in Australian regional and rural economic development

Author: Perlgut, Don

Date published: **2017**

Vocational education and training (VET) is particularly important in rural and regional Australia, because of the economic and business structure of most regional and rural areas. This policy paper from Community Colleges Australia examines the role that community education organisations play in regional and rural Australia through providing accredited VET. The paper notes that, although there are many good examples of community education regional development partnerships around Australia, there is little consistency in the approaches, little understanding of the models that have developed, and little knowledge of how to build on these experiences to enhance Australian regional and rural economic development. The paper concludes that it is time for a significant investigation into these approaches, supporting pilot and other projects that will assist community providers in regional and rural Australia.

Community Colleges Australia proposes a number of recommendations for Commonwealth, state and territory governments: (1) set up pilot funding programs that enable community education providers to fulfil their potential; (2) increase funding for community education organisations for 'community service obligation' (CSO) activities that serve vulnerable and disadvantaged learners; (3) provide infrastructure funding to modernise physical facilities and to provide high-quality digital connectivity; (4) utilise regional and rural community education providers to do what they do best: engage with vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians, especially young people, supporting a system of traineeships and pathways to jobs and other learning; (5) develop a coordinated national-state-territory policy statement on the value and place of adult and community education, updating the 2008 Ministerial statement, a statement that acknowledges the complementary role that community providers play; (6) acknowledge the importance and value by funding proper professional development and staff training for community sector providers, with particular attention to the training needs of staff working for regional and rural providers; (7) examine all VET funding programs to ensure that community providers are not disadvantaged by regulations, short time-frames and limited horizons (such as one-year) funding cycles; (8) request the National Centre for Vocational Education Research to collect and publish data on regional and rural student outcomes and provider comparisons; and (9) provide funding to Community Colleges Australia to undertake pertinent research.

https://cca.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/The-Role-of-Community-Education-in-Regional-and-Rural-Economic-Development-7February2017.pdf

Preparing rural and regional students for the future world of work: developing authentic career focussed curriculum through a collaborative partnership model

Authors: Woodroffe, Jessica; Kilpatrick, Sue; Williams, Brett; Jago, Matthew

Date published: **2017**

Small places are not devoid of opportunities nor of successful programs to equip them for the future, despite perception to the contrary (West, 2013). This paper considers career education in the context of rural places in the modern globalised world. The paper introduces the Pathways to Success project, involving more than eighty initiatives mapped to the Australian curriculum showcasing further education, training and careers in local industries to more than 8000 learners and their schools and teachers in Tasmania. It outlines how a partnership model among schools, industry, technical and vocational, and higher education sectors can be used to move from a sole dependency model to a partnership model of career education. Drawing on the project's mixed method evaluation results, the paper considers the key opportunities and challenges for preparing rural and regional Tasmanian students for the future world of work. It focuses on how collaborative partnerships can better equip educators with information and networks they need to positively impact on how young rural and regional Tasmanian students consider education pathways and career options to get to 'what's next' in their lives. It showcases how rural and regional communities and resources can be used to develop new and innovative place-based career and curriculum learning.

http://journal.spera.asn.au/index.php/AIJRE/article/view/143/0

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- Exposing rural young people to possible careers in rural places and elsewhere is a key part of informing aspiration. This exposure should take place within the context of curriculum learning that is linked to careers

- There is evidence that rural youth are often not given the information and skills they need to 'make an informed choice about where they wish to live and work' (Bauch, 2001, p. 204). While teachers can play a substantial role in supporting young people to make choices about their future; teachers' own knowledge and understanding of available careers and education pathways may be limited (Hooley, Watts and Andrews, 2005).

- Rural teachers reported benefits related to industry contact and networking, discovery and understanding of careers of the future and employment pathways for their students within a local context.

- The challenges reported by educators in accessing this form of professional development were mainly pragmatic considerations including travel to and from rural communities, which took teachers' time and required ongoing support from school leaders.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged students of NSW community education providers: analysis of participants in government-funded VET 2016

Author: Community Colleges Australia (CCA)

Date published: **2017**

This report by Community Colleges Australia (CCA) details the performance of [New South Wales] NSW community education providers in reaching vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, based on 2016 data compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). This report compares the NSW NCVER 2016 'government-funded' student data, examining the differences between not-for-profit community education providers (most of them often known in New South Wales as 'community colleges'), TAFE (government/public) providers and for-profit private providers. A close examination of the NCVER's government-funded VET data for 2016 shows that on all tracked measures of vulnerability and disadvantage, NSW community education VET providers significantly over-performed compared to both TAFE and private for-profit providers, disproportionately catering for students from the state's most disadvantaged groups and regions.

https://cca.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/NSW-Community-Colleges-Govt-Funded-VET-2016-Analysis-28September2017-1.pdf

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- On all tracked measures of vulnerability and disadvantage, NSW community education VET providers significantly over-performed compared to both TAFE and private for-profit providers, disproportionately catering for students from the state's most disadvantaged groups and regions. This achievement results in large part from the funding provided by the NSW Government's Community Service Obligation ('CSO') program and the ability of NSW community colleges in using the CSO funds effectively and successfully to meet the program's desired outcomes to 'guarantee training for key equity groups'.

Regional disparities in apprentice attrition rates: heat and quarter four's significance in northern Australia

Authors: Zoellner, Don; Brearley, Matt; Oppermann, Elspeth

Date published: **2017**

Apprenticeship completion rates have remained persistently low for decades in spite of broad agreement over the causes of non-completions. A possible factor missing from these explanations is climate, particularly in northern Australia where traditional trade apprentices are exposed to extreme conditions and exert themselves. We hypothesize that: the onset of hotter, more humid weather in northern Australia during the fourth quarter of the calendar year would be reflected by an increase in trades' apprenticeship withdrawals and cancellations. Using the entire National Apprentice and Trainee Collection, completion and attrition data were geographically categorized into north and south Australia. Statistical analyses identified a clear difference in trade occupation's cancellations and withdrawals. Regionally specific climate variables are briefly examined, further supporting the claim that heat stress appears a likely contributor. These cross-disciplinary findings have a broader significance as apprenticeship completions contribute to socio-economic growth and the public policy agenda of northern development.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14480220.2017.1312694?needAccess=true

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- Despite large numbers of students entering into traineeships and apprenticeships, there have been high rates of non-completion.

- Northern Australia's climatic conditions in general are omitted from national and regional studies of apprentice and trainee completion rates. However:

  - Historical accounts of the physical and psychological discomfort of the monsoonal north have been recently complemented by an emerging literature on climatic heat stress in the region.

  - Results point to an unambiguous point of difference in the timing of apprentices withdrawing from or cancelling their training contracts between northern and southern Australia.

- Given that heat stress has been shown to be relatively invisible in workplaces and that the vocational education and training system's policy deliberations do not consider climatic impacts, the authors have speculated that heat stress might be a contributor to increased trade cancellations and withdrawals in quarter four in northern Australia. This conjecture is supported by the time-series analysis of a very large cohort over an extended period.

Growing opportunities in the Fraser Coast: informing regional workforce development

Authors: Reeson, Andrew; Mason, Claire; Sanderson, Todd

Date published: **2017**

This study informs regional workforce development planning in the Fraser Coast Local Government Area. Drawing on literature reviews, employment data and stakeholder interviews, the study reveals how the demand and supply of skills is changing over time. Based on this analysis it identifies how regional workforce development could be directed to maximise future economic opportunities for workers and businesses.

https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/growing_opportunities_research_report.pdf

[Chapter 5 looks at supply of skills in regional areas and includes analysis of NCVER's data on student completions in the regions]

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- While there are openings for high-skilled professional workers in the region, most workers are in middle to low-skilled roles (see section 4.2). For this reason, the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector is likely to remain a key driver of skills supply in the Fraser Coast and for the Wide Bay in the short- to medium-term.

- Although stakeholders were not enthusiastic about online training as a strategy for broadening educational offerings in the region, other research suggests that digital education has great potential to empower regional communities (Reeson et al. 2016). It is most amenable to supporting the delivery of subjects which require less hands-on training. Relying solely on remote learning is unlikely to succeed however, particularly since the vast majority of students require the sort of tutoring, mentoring and motivation that is best delivered face-to-face.

Rural and remote vocational education and training relies on TAFE

Author: TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)

Date published: **2016**

Regional TAFE Institutes are prominent local institutions with an unmatched geographical footprint in provincial, rural and remote communities. These regional locations provide crucial access to tertiary education for regional Australians, and leadership for economies and communities in the regions. VET funding models should recognise the true role of regional TAFE Institutes, as this carries some marginal cost to vocational education delivery. This paper suggests this is not only important for regional economic development, but sustaining this capacity in the regions for TAFE is critical for reliable supply of apprentices and essential skills in thin training markets.

https://www.tda.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Policy-2016-rural-and-remote.pdf

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- TAFE institutes are prominent regional institutions.

- In regional Australia school and tertiary education attainment is lower than in major cities. People are twice as likely to have VET qualifications as higher education qualification.

- In Australia's regions industry diversity is high, population densities are low and geographical spread is wide. High quality, efficient training provision in these regions requires close cooperation between TAFE, community agencies and services, other training providers, and with local businesses.

- TAFEs bear considerable extra marginal costs to successfully maintain and provide the highest quality delivery to students and local enterprises – regardless of class size or enterprise location or industry demand.

- TDA recommends that VET funding models explicitly recognise the true costs for regional TAFE Institutes in meeting community and industry expectations for high quality training in thin regional markets.

The regional paradox: undersupply of skilled workers and over representation of unemployed and disengaged youth

Author: Escalier McLean Consulting

Date published: **2016**

Regional Australia faces a major conundrum with the need to address the simultaneous challenges of high levels of youth unemployment occurring within the context of local skills shortages. In order to gain an overview of regional TAFE institute activity a project was established by TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) with the explicit purpose of: exploring the role of regional TAFEs in overcoming regional skills shortages and assisting to reduce unemployment in a regional context; and developing case studies and data that support proven strategies which could be applied by a regional TAFE to improve outcomes in these areas. In a December 2015 survey, the experiences and views of TAFE Institute Directors were sought to inform this research. The research found that, in the absence of a comprehensive policy approach at all levels of government, TAFE institutes and local agencies have been working together to tackle the issues. One of the key findings in this research is that whilst there have been policy imperatives associated with addressing skill shortages and youth unemployment in Australia, the issues have generally been progressed separately in an ad hoc manner. TAFE Regional Directors identified the essential principles which need to be in place to address skill shortages and youth unemployment in tandem.

http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/407499.

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET
- Of the 10 essential principles to address skill shortages and youth unemployment, the following were rated as Very High or High Priority:

    o work placements for those involved in employment and training programs meeting high quality standards;

    o deep and broad local partnerships are in place to bring together education and training, industry, employment agencies, government departments etc;

    o employer ownership of the issue, decent work and sustainable work practices, with firms investing in their future workforce;

    o sufficient resources to enable varied levels of support, especially for those at risk;

    o establishing the right time for intervention – asap after leaving school;

    o developing a pathway approach to delivery;

    o local areas having flexibility in policy design and delivery

- Understanding current issues affecting regional Australia is important for the development of sound policy and future planning. A number of issues have been identified, including:

    o A lack of strong employment demand in regional areas and thin markets mean that often a skill shortage is about 1-2 jobs in particular sectors that need filling but to be economically viable training organisations can only justify cohorts of students of at least 10-15. This relates to the funding model.

- A number of solutions are offered to address these issues, including:

    o Providing local regional areas flexibility in policy design and delivery including flexibility in the funding model.

    o Providing trends in industry which are up-to-date and accurate for the local region to inform job seekers and training organisations where they should focus their training I.e. to understand local skills supply and demand and enable targeting.

- o incentivising and strengthening collaboration between training organisations to ensure that they are sharing resources in 'thin' markets

- Among the recommendations was for the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, in conjunction with State Training Authorities and Skill Service Organisations (SSOs) where appropriate, provide the funding and support required to ensure a smooth transition for young people in regional locations from school to further education and/or training and employment or for unemployed young people to re-engage through

  - o the provision of financial and administrative support to enable the development of regional partnerships between secondary schools, training providers, industry and community organisations to facilitate successful outcomes for youth and industry;

  - o the provision of program/s to help young people achieve Year 12, or its equivalent and/or to facilitate their re-engagement with education or training to improve job prospects;

  - o exploring and implementing projects that support young people to develop employability and entrepreneurial skills;

  - o supporting TAFE Institutes to work in partnership with schools to provide Vocational Education and Training programs for school students, including high quality work exploration/vocational placements;

  - o support for the development of projects that improve Australian School-based Apprenticeship outcomes;

  - o developing programs which provide individualised (case management) support for high-risk young people transitioning from school;

  - o providing financial resources to TAFE in regional areas, acknowledging the additional cost burden, and reduction in social support, placed on rural and remote students who must relocate to study;

Engaging young people in regional, rural and remote Australia

Author: Davie, Ann

Date published: **2015**

This report demonstrates the complexity of youth engagement in rural areas by discussing the increased disadvantage that young people in rural, and particularly in remote areas, face. The issues associated with disadvantage are complex and inter-related, requiring a coordinated approach by their communities in addressing engagement and disengagement.

https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/engaging-young-people-regional-rural-and-remote-australia [The report includes a review of recent research]

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- Educational attainment continues to lag in rural areas, with remote and Indigenous communities recording the lowest rates of school attendance and completion.

- The costs associated with education are a barrier. Providing education services within rural areas costs more, and there are significant costs associated with travel or moving to further education opportunities.

- There is a need for local providers of post-compulsory education and training.

- Indigenous youth often disengage from education because of the lack of culturally appropriate curriculums and the attitudes of their families and communities towards education.

- Training needs to relate to local context and current labour demands

- There is a lack of career counselling that incorporates an understanding of rural conditions.

- Programs addressing the needs of rural youth need to take into consideration local context and need to involve the community as a whole.

- Young people and community members stated that there were poor linkages between different sectors (education, employment, government, support services, etc.).

- A major issue is the impact of limited choices in education and employment for young people in rural areas. Many young people reported that they were unable to pursue studies in fields that they were interested in, and that employment opportunities in those fields could not be found in their local areas

Youth, belonging and transitions: identifying opportunities and barriers for Indigenous young people in remote communities

Authors: Cuervo, Hernan; Barakat, Neheda; Turnbull, Malcolm

Date published: **2015**

This research report aims to identify the personal and structural resources, the barriers and the motivations that facilitate or hinder successful transitions by Indigenous young people in remote communities, particularly within East Arnhem Land, into further and higher education and employment. The research speaks to current policy initiatives that aim to improve transitions for young Indigenous people to further education, training and employment (COAG 2012). It also fills a research gap in the youth studies literature by mapping the evidence-based data on factors that impact on Indigenous youth transitions in remote communities. In this vein, [the authors] conclude by examining the usefulness of the concept youth-as-transition (a key theoretical tool in the analysis of young people's lives in the field of youth studies) for Indigenous youth in remote communities.

http://vital.voced.edu.au/vital/access/services/Download/ngv:68948/SOURCE2

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET
- Urban, regional and remote contexts are qualitatively different learning and working environments for Indigenous people and… the provision of accredited VET programs becomes most problematic in the most remote communities

- In order to construct meaningful opportunities for indigenous youth, training systems need to (a) be driven by client demand rather than suppliers' interests, (b) take a holistic approach to education/training within an Indigenous paradigm, and (c) ensure cultural appropriateness by integrating community culture and knowledge into curricula. Further, there is a need for training to be 'embedded into community and community business', preferably delivered by Indigenous trainers, and emphasise that the relevant community have control over all aspects of delivery.

- Programs for increasing Indigenous participation have been successful where community culture and knowledge are completely integrated and the relevant community has control over all aspects of VET delivery.

Location, vocation, aspiration: findings from Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2014

This report considers this year's Youth Survey findings in relation to young people's socio-economic status (SES) measured by whether they were living in low, moderate or high SES areas. In order to conduct this analysis, responses were mapped by their postcode against the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Advantage and Disadvantage from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to determine the relative SES of the area they live in. A closer examination of remoteness is also included.

The report concludes that young people living in low SES areas were slightly less likely to consider that where they lived would have an influence on their future career success, in spite of the evidence to the contrary. It is argued that, given the geographic nature of so much entrenched disadvantage, it is important that service and policy responses factor this into their design. Responses to locational disadvantage need to be at a more local level, although a mix of both place-based and mainstream approaches is probably most effective. Ensuring that any place-based response engages the community is also essential. This is especially so for young people living in regional or remote areas. The challenges for young people living in disadvantaged areas are many and the policy settings and service provision required are complex. Responses that strengthen communities as a whole will empower young people to access pathways to help them reach their aspirations.

Author: Mission Australia

Date published: **2015**
https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/research/young-people/387-youth-survey-2014-ses-report/file
[Pages 26-29 focuses on the intersection between remoteness and SES and the impact on aspirations, etc.]

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

- Young people who lived outside major cities were more likely to be living in low or moderate SES areas than young people in the major cities.

- Remoteness impacted on whether young people planned to get a job or apprenticeship, or go to university after school.

- The gap in the proportion of people in high SES areas compared to low or moderate SES areas who planned to get an apprenticeship is larger outside the major cities.

Overview of Remote Education Systems qualitative results

Author: Guenther, John

Date published: **2015**

This report provides an overview of key results from qualitative data obtained through the Remote Education Systems (RES) project, conducted by the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP). It is a preliminary report designed for use by and feedback to stakeholders. Qualitative data were collected during the period from mid-2012 through to the end of 2014 to seek responses to the following four research questions: What is education for in remote Australia and what can/should it achieve? What defines 'successful' educational outcomes from the remote Aboriginal standpoint? How does teaching need to change in order to achieve 'success' as defined by the Aboriginal standpoint? What would an effective education system in remote Australia look like? The data came from interviews and focus groups in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia and two online focus groups with participants coming in from across all Australian states except Tasmania. The researchers interviewed a large range of stakeholders from both the demand and supply sides of the remote education system. To ensure that the results better reflected the positions of remote Aboriginal people in the data, responses from Aboriginal people from remote locations were quantified separately from those of non-Aboriginal people living remotely and all people living in non-remote Australia.

https://nintione.com.au/resource/CW025_RemoteEducationSystemsQualitativeResults.pdf

Key points in relation to regional, rural remote VET

The top four responses by Aboriginal stakeholders living in remote Australia

- The main purposes of education in remote communities are about:

  - maintaining connection to language, land and culture
  - ensuring that learners have a strong identity rooted in their context
  - providing pathways to employment and economic participation
  - being strong in both worlds (western and Aboriginal).

- Success in remote education (in order of remote community responses) is about:

  - parent involvement and role models in children's education
  - academic outcomes – predominantly basic competence in reading, writing and numeracy
  - community engagement – communities being part of what happens at school
  - attendance.

- There are multiple teaching responses to achieve success:

  - ensuring the health and wellbeing of students at school
  - drawing on and building the expertise of local language Aboriginal educators
  - building strong relationships between teachers, students, assistants, families and other community members
  - using English as a Second Language (ESL) and multilingual learning approaches.

- Potential responses from the education system to address the above priorities include

  - promoting parent and community power
  - approaches that work with communities developmentally
  - partnerships with community stakeholders
  - the importance of secondary provision.

Other resources

VOCEDplus focus on… Regional skilling page at https://www.voced.edu.au/focus-regional-skilling provides some recent research and resources on this topic.