



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

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

Your details

Title*

Dr

First name*

Terence

Last name*

Mills

E-mail address*

[REDACTED]

State/Territory*

Victoria

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

Yes

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)? *

Please specify the organisation on whose behalf you are submitting

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

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.

Background information: The following background information will be useful in understanding my response. In 2017, I enrolled in a Master of Teaching (Secondary), full-time, through Deakin University. I have almost completed the course. Because I live in Bendigo, I have taken every subject on-line (as a cloud student as they say at Deakin) except for my placements in schools. Previously I had never studied this way and I was concerned about how I would take to this style of teaching and learning. It took me some months to work out how to learn effectively by this mode, but eventually I did. It's not rocket science, but learning this way is quite different from being in a classroom. I really enjoy learning this way now.

Challenge A: One action for expanding study options for students across Australia is to expand the opportunities for on-line learning. This is easier said than done, but we can learn from Deakin University which does this extremely well. My experience suggests that, as we introduce more options for learning on-line, students and teachers need to change their approaches to learning and teaching. On the other hand, for example, once we figure out the best way to present trigonometry on-line, we have solved the problem for the entire nation.

Note that I am not suggesting that on-line learning will solve all the problems being considered by the Expert Advisory Group.

Challenge B: An important advantage of on-line learning is that students do not need to relocate in order to learn. This was a key reason for me in choosing to be a cloud student at Deakin. During my course, I met two of my lecturers face-to-face each on one occasion, and I happened to meet two fellow students when we were placed at the same school. That was the full extent of my face-to-face interaction with Deakin folk. Through on-line interactions with lecturers and fellow students, you get a sense of their views, their priorities, and, to some extent their personalities. Perhaps I had more interaction with lecturers than the average on-campus university student would have had. Certainly, our on-line interactions were all business: no time-wasting chit-chat.

There were some group assignments where members of the group were sometimes in different states. Occasionally we met by Zoom or Skype. The technical developments in the internet have reduced, perhaps eliminated, the need for face-to-face meetings - of all sorts. I feel that I am part of Deakin University even though I have not been on-campus once during the course. Universities should, like Deakin, be mindful of the fact that many (maybe most) of their students are not on-campus. Universities have to think differently. This change of thinking will have an impact on the language used in official documents, the course materials, and the types of assessment.

Challenge E: As we move towards more on-line teaching and learning, the location of the teaching staff becomes less important. The role of IT staff becomes increasingly important. This radical change allows work to be done from all around Australia. In my course, I have had lecturers from Geelong, Melbourne, Warrnambool and Hobart. As a student, I am interested in the quality of the teaching, not the location of the lecturer. There must be a lot of background activity of which I am not aware to make this process work. Universities could increase their efforts to promote the advantages of on-line learning to students in schools, so that students consider this as a reasonable

alternative.

An enterprising university could develop a course to train professionals to develop and present on-line courses.

The University of London has been offering degrees to external students anywhere for many years, well before the creation of the internet. Why should students in other countries have to come to Australia to study at an Australian university? Why should Australian universities establish campuses in other countries?

Challenge F: In a national inclusive approach to education, Australia needs to change the way in which we plan to meet the educational needs of RRR communities. One size does not fit all. Halsey makes this clear in his final report. As part of my Master of Teaching course at Deakin, I wrote a substantial research paper entitled “Planning for regional education in Australia: A case study set in Bendigo”. This paper addresses the first step in planning for school education in a regional city by forecasting the number of school-aged children in Bendigo, by age and year, over each of the next 10 years. The paper shows that national or state-wide trends need not be reflected in regional trends. The methods in this paper could be adapted to other regional communities. A National Regional Education Commissioner would provide a focus for this sort of research.

One of Deming’s 14 points for management is to “eliminate targets”. In general I am not in favour of numerical targets or goals. Too often these are arbitrary numbers chosen without any scientific basis. Numerical targets are often unrealistic. Perhaps you remember this one: “By 1990, no Australian child will be living in poverty.”

I prefer an evaluation method based on monitoring several reliable and valid standard measures that are easily obtained, can be tracked over time, and are publicly available. Surely we do not need to collect more data. One such measure might be the proportion of residents in a community with a non-school qualification. A time series plot will tell us if we are headed in the right direction. One could determine other suitable measures in association with experts from ABS.

Challenges A-F: There are challenges associated with being any sort of student. On-line learning requires dedication – this is no bad thing! As a student, I must be organised; I ask questions; I keep up with the reading; I contribute to discussion groups; I endeavour to complete tasks well ahead of time. As I said, it’s not rocket science, and not substantially different from being an on-campus student. But I ask thoughtful questions whenever I like; I make considered contributions to discussions; my IT skills are challenged and consequently improve. There is no travel, and the coffee at home is better.

Terence Mills, Bendigo, 26 January 2019

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.

Shakespeare, Newton and Einstein were not born in capital cities; nor were our own Robert Menzies, Enid Lyons, Frank Burnet, or Cathy Freeman. It behoves Australia to maximise the opportunities for all Australians, irrespective of where they live.

An overarching problem is the tyranny of distance. On-line learning has the potential to address many educational issues associated with this problem.

To be successful in learning and teaching on-line, students, teachers, and educational establishments have to reconsider traditional approaches. In doing so, we go back to basics and are confronted with the fundamental, sobering question as we re-think our traditional approaches: "What do students really have to learn in this course or subject?"

IT specialists become increasingly important in this environment, and arguably, at least as important as teachers.

On-line learning is not a panacea for all the issues being considered by the Expert Advisory Group. However, it is inevitable that on-line learning will play an increasingly important role in learning and teaching. We should maximise its potential.

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.

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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.

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

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

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

Privacy policy and contact

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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