



National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy

Submission form

Welcome to the submission process for the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy (the Strategy).

The Regional Education Expert Advisory Group invites all interested parties to put forward ideas on the [framing paper](#) released on 20 December 2018.

The Advisory Group is seeking action-orientated responses to the challenges and key questions identified in this paper. The paper outlines the background of the strategy formation, the problem facing regional, rural and remote education and the challenges faced by those communities.

Your responses to the Framing Paper should focus on practical steps the Government could take to improve tertiary education access and attainment for people from regional, rural and remote backgrounds.

The form can be submitted any time before public submissions close at **5:00pm (AEDT) on 1 February 2019**.

Please note that the fields in the form are text only and pictures cannot be included. To return your completed form or if you experience difficulties in completing the form, please contact the Strategy Secretariat at RegionalStrategy@education.gov.au.

Note:

- information provided through the submission process may be published with your permission, including in the documentation relating to the Strategy and on the department's website
- questions marked with a * require an answer to be provided.

Privacy agreement

I agree to the Privacy Notice and Terms and Conditions of Submissions included at [Attachment A](#) to this document*

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Note: If you do not accept the Privacy Notice and Conditions of Submissions please do not complete or submit this form.

I agree to have my submission published.*

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

Your details

Title*

Ms

First name*

Keryn

Last name*

Bolte

E-mail address*

[REDACTED]

State/Territory*

Victoria

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

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

Submission details

I am making this submission as a: *

- Educator
- parent/carer/guardian
- Student / potential student
- School
- University
- Training Provider
- Employer
- community organisation
- government agency
- peak body / Think Tank
- academic person
- Other**

Rural Community member

Are you submitting on behalf of an organisation (including a business, other body or agency)? *

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

Please specify the organisation on whose behalf you are submitting

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

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

National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy – Submission form

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.

National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy Framing Paper – community member response

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?

A collaboration between current regionally based education providers is necessary to ensure there is equitable and functional approaches to what kinds of programs are offered, what the communities need in terms of courses being offered that specifically support and grow the development of rurally based communities. It is all well and good to aim for higher education skills and knowledge, but there must be the roles and career opportunities for these graduates to find bonefide work in the fields that best suit rural workforce development. If education providers worked together to analyse this, then strategise to meet the needs, it will be to the best use of all their skills and knowledge.

There already exists established regionally based universities and vocational training. These organisations are in the best position to articulate the needs of their students and community. What needs analysis have they already done that could be used. So too, the Dept of Health and Human Services have a wealth of data that needs to be shared and combined with that of the education sector – this mitigates the unnecessary delay of more needs analyses being undertaken. We have the information already – it should be pooled, reviewed and used.

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?

There are already in existence a number of initiatives such as pathways from VET to university degrees (eg: TAFE and La Trobe Nursing degree, La Trobe and University of Melbourne Biomedical to Medicine degree, ASHE, on so on).

Industries need to support these kinds of programs, create positions that allow staff to progress along a career pathway and provide time and financial support for staff and students to undertake the work integrated learning that is often necessary for health, manufacturing, service support industries to 'grow their own'.

The unique context of rural workforce development capitalises on relationships that are built out of a lack of resources. Locally based people know what is required and have the connections to make things happen. These people across industry and education need to be facilitated to work together – examples could be industry and education sector expos to promote networking and promotion of current practice. So too, rurally based research that is driven by need rather than perceptions and embedded in 'real work' contexts with definable outcomes, should be encouraged.

Key to this would be devising strategies to 'grow our own' and to particularly acknowledge the skills and diversity that already exists in rural regions. There is no reason why completing education in a rural area should be considered 'second rate' to metro based education and training. In fact, we train our students to the betterment of our metro cousins in many instances. So making it attractive to stay in rural areas and further develop skills and knowledge can be facilitated by ensuring good quality educators are kept, nurtured and valued. This may be through financial incentives but often it can be argued that money is not a key driver. Recognition of skill, work-life balance, diversity of experiences and the opportunity to develop broad- reaching skills are all very attractive to a sophisticated workforce. These are the traits we want to foster in rural workforce and the relevant industries have a significant role to play, in partnership with the education providers. That divide between education and practice must be bridged and creating opportunities for partnerships to develop is core to success.

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?

Students currently are encouraged to study rurally but the breadth of courses and training is not comparable with those offered in metro. In some instances, this is not actually a bad thing. Some education programs require intensive, specialised training that makes it unrealistic to be able to offer outside a metro area. It is having the understanding of what is relevant, needed and feasible in rural areas that should be driving planning. Those students who do need to travel to urban-based training must be facilitated through financial support, be provided access to excellent public transport, as well as reliable and first world internet and IT capabilities that can facilitate remote and distance education, where feasible.

In health there is currently quite good financial support to promote rural practice opportunities to students whilst they study; there is much less support for staff who teach these students. For them to obtain support to develop their skills in facilitation and teaching means they can keep the skills in the region and keep teaching in the region. Good facilitation is the absolute backbone of good teaching and these staff must be provided the support to develop and grow skills that enable them to support their students. Funding for training is desperately needed as post graduate and further education is grossly expensive for all, not only rurally based staff. Universities need consider the barrier these costs create, governments (both federal and state) must acknowledge that investment is both valuable and necessary.

4. What forms of support might be useful in helping students from RRR backgrounds to continue with their tertiary study?

Financial is the obvious one but also social support frameworks whilst away from home.

Embedded education and training that encourages students to consider their own rural context and how they might 'take something back' once qualified. The more we can encourage students to think about how they might make a difference through their own development, the better they and we will be.

5. How can universities assist RRR students to feel like they belong on their campus?

I believe this is already being acted upon and improved, universities have a good understanding of the psychosocial needs of their students; because their students understand what they need and the universities are listening more and more.

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?

Students need to see how it will benefit them. Talks from current students, open days, careers expos, work experience. These all work to showing students what is possible. So let's make that happen in their own backyard, highlight their own context, make it clear what they could contribute to their own community.

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?

There is no one size fits all, support must be individualised and the mechanisms in place must be able to work to this. There has to be the flexibility in the system to support everyone's needs. Often the need to prove disadvantage just creates more disadvantage. Don't expect students to have to prove their level of deservedness. We have to provide documentation, proof, references, write 1000 word submissions on why we should be awarded support – these can all act as deterrents to seek out support. How can the system be simplified so as to mitigate complex check and balances that some administrator must undertake to decide how deserving somebody is. Simple criteria: I am from the country, here's my address, this is what I am studying and what I need. Reduce hoop-jumping.

8. How can we better support Indigenous people from RRR areas to access and succeed in tertiary education?

Talk to Indigenous people are found out what it is they want and need. Better yet, let them govern their own needs and supports.

A treaty would go a long way to showing Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people that they matter and they are valued. Yes, lofty aspirations when all you are asking for is some practical tips on how better to support people... but in all honesty this is what is required and what everyone should be advocating for at every level. Then Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people are truly equal, and not disadvantaged simply as a result of their skin colour.

Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas

9. How can tertiary education providers further stimulate economic growth in RRR areas?

From a health perspective (my context), rural clinical schools of teaching especially for allied health. Support programs that allow rural staff to attend tertiary health services to gain the specialised knowledge that they seek. But also encouraging metro-based people to stop being so metro-centric. They need to come to rural areas and see what is available. In my experience they are always surprised at the level of skill, the diversity of experiences and the innovation that is already occurring in rural areas. Once they know what is available they will come, they will advocate to send students, they will advocate for skill development in rural areas.

Rural roadshows have been shown to have a positive impact for metro-based academics to understand what is possible in rural areas but these take time and funding. Rural needs to be promoted not only as a destination, but as a viable workplace and learning option so put some money into promoting rural to metro counterparts.

10. What actions would further strengthen and increase the attractiveness of regional universities?

Innovation in offering courses and programs that capitalise on the unique learning that can occur in rural areas. Problems like the water supply to the Murray Darling Basin should not be left to metro-based experts and academics who have never lived or worked in that region.

Animal husbandry that is based where it is actually implemented. Sustainable farming and cropping that is developed in response to climate change and dynamic landscapes that acknowledge old

practices no longer work; or some regions are no longer able to sustain a particular method of farming.

Making best use of technology to mitigate the tyranny of distance and isolation.

Thinking about the whole community they will be interacting with, not just the (ultimately) fee paying student.

11. What policies would attract more metropolitan and international students to study at RRR areas, including regional universities and campuses?

They need to know more about what is out here so as to be able to make an informed choice to go rural. They need to understand what opportunities exist and how they can contribute and continue to develop these opportunities. The decision to go rural should be as painless as possible, for everyone regardless of background. International students must not be discriminated against through federal and state funding grants, often they are very willing to go rural and can make a genuine contribution to the communities where they end up.

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?

Will they be held to account? And if so, how would this be measured? Can measures be put in place that are 'real-time', responsive and allow the flexibility to make changes as they are required if things aren't working?

Is one individual able to oversee the regional education of a country this size? How would this occur? Who would they get their advice from?

Will they listen to Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander voices and make a credible commitment to what they need?

What advocacy will they be able to provide on the behalf of rural people that goes above and beyond what their elected representatives already provide? Because look how well that is working out for rural Australia!

I would ask, how do you make the current system more effective, more collaborative and more rural-centric? Because adding one more role doesn't feel like it will add much more than paperwork, reports and inflated salaries to be taken advantage of.

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?

When education in rural areas is comparable to that of metro, in context, then we will understand what success looks like. When rural education is recognised for providing *better* education on rural issues/programs than metro.

Measuring the IMPACT of these education programs is far more valuable than obtaining a specific number of enrolments or graduates. Let's train these students yes, but let's make sure they are graduates of the highest quality who are community-minded, innovative and constantly improving on what was there before. Prioritising quantifiable outcomes has not proven to have worked in the past, qualitative review must also be included to measure success. In all our education, regardless of metro or rural, should have the key goal of improving not only the individual, but the community in which they live; on both a micro and macro level.

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.

So well done on asking for input. But please do not discount the unquantifiable suggestions because these are the complex tasks that have been put in the 'too hard basket' for too long and now need to be addressed before any further advancement can be made.

It is no longer about an individual achieving a qualification, it is how that individual contributes through their skill and knowledge to the betterment of their community that really counts. And nobody supports their own community better than a rural local!

Privacy Notice and Terms and Conditions for Submissions

Purpose for collection of information relating to submissions, and the use and disclosure of that information

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training (the department) invites you to make a submission in relation to the development of the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy (the Strategy).

Through the submission process, the department will be collecting certain information, including personal information. The information collected may include your name, your email address, the organisation you represent (if applicable) and any other information that is included in your submission.

The department may use and disclose this information for the purposes of informing or contributing to the Strategy, policy development related to the subject of the Strategy, publishing submissions (including by making submissions publicly available), and providing feedback to the department's Minister about the Strategy and submission process.

The department may also contact you to provide updates on the progress of the Strategy, if you have indicated in your submission response that you would like to receive such updates.

Publishing submissions

The department reserves the right to publish any submissions, including only a sample of submissions, made in relation to the Strategy. This includes by making those submissions publicly available on the department's website, or through any report/s arising from the Strategy.

You may elect **not** to have your submission published. If you do not want to have your submission published, **do not check** the relevant box on this document.

Before publication, your email address, if provided with your submission, will be removed. **However, your name will be published with your submission.**

Note, any information about individuals contained in your submission will be published. Note also that the name and address of any organisation you represent, if included in your submission, will also be published.

The department reserves the right to amend or redact prior to publication, or to not publish, any submission if it considers the submission to be defamatory or derogatory in any way, or if it includes information relating to individuals.

The department also reserves the right to modify or adapt submissions for the purposes of web accessibility and any publishing formatting requirements.

For more information, please also visit the department's [Copyright](#) page.

Third party information, including of individuals, in submissions

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

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

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

Privacy policy and contact

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

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