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.

Opportunity through learning

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 ☒

No ☐

Your details

Title*	Ms
First name*	Bev
Last name*	Hoffmann
E-mail address*	██████████
State/Territory*	Victoria

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

Yes ☒

No ☐

Submission details

I am making this submission as a: *

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

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

Yes ☒
No ☐

Please specify the organisation on whose behalf you are submitting

NE Tracks Local Learning Employment Network & North East Local Learning Employment Network

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

Yes ☒
No ☐

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.

The NE Tracks Local Learning and Employment Network (NE Tracks LLEN) and North East Local Learning and Employment Network (NELLEN) are two of the 31 Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET). LLENs are partnership brokers who improve education and employment participation, engagement, attainment and transition for secondary school aged young people https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/llens.aspx. DET provides funding for 13 metropolitan and 18 rural and regional LLENs http://www.llen.org.au/.

NE Tracks and NELLEN operate across the geographical boundaries of seven local government areas in NE Victoria, with three classed as Outer Regional Areas.

In addition, Victoria's DET funds the LLENs to deliver the Structured Workplace Learning Program (SWL). http://www.llen.org.au/swl/. SWL is on-the-job training that allows school students to develop their work skills and understand employer expectations. Work placements are negotiated with local employers and occur during Years 10, 11 and 12 for those students undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) and/or their Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) study. The placements are incredibly valuable when it comes to seeking future employment and the LLENs are the key to engaging local businesses in this program.

In 2018, NE Tracks and NELLEN received Regional Development Victoria (RDV) funding, through the Regional Skills Fund, to deliver a Year 9 Workforce Development Project, addressing training, skills and workforce needs for two major sectors in the region – Health Care/ Social Assistance and Agriculture/ Horticulture. The project creates community partnerships with secondary schools, employers and registered training organisations to deliver workplace introductory experiences for 15-16-year students in supportive workplaces.

Students from regional, rural and remote (RRR) backgrounds face a complex mix of geographic, economic, financial, social and familial influences when pursuing post-secondary education despite being assured, *"no matter the type of course you want to study, how long you want to study for or where you want to study, you can be assured that in Australia you will have a high quality and rewarding study experience.*[i]*"* The Halsey Independent Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education[ii] and the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy Framing Paper clearly demonstrate the complicated nature of RRR students' situations, and the intersecting influences that result in the current worrying statistics across the nation.

NE Tracks LLEN and NELLEN's combined submission draws from their experiences with the current program/project delivery and their 17 collective years of partnership brokering between local government, employers, schools and community agencies since the statewide network of 31

associations was were first established in 2001. The response is also, in part, framed by the work of Dr. Ani Wierenga [iii] from the University of Melbourne, particularly referencing her longitudinal research project with 32 Tasmanian young people *making a life*.[iv] Dr. Wierenga's research, published in 2009, defines four categories as predictors of a young person's trajectory during secondary schooling years and into young adulthood, classifying their narrative and identity sources and the likelihood of successful transition. The stories told by the young people to themselves, and others, held a distinct focus – local or global – with a layer of identity-building pattern defined as 'clear' or 'unclear' narratives. The matrix below explains the four categories and introduces the names associated with each configuration of the four observed elements.

Four ideal-types of cultural orientation[v]

		Global	***Exploring*** Middle class and female working Class	***Wandering*** Working class, non-working working class Mixed gender
Focus				
		Local	***Settling*** Working class, more male than female	***Retreating*** Female Working class & non-working working class
			Clear	Unclear

Stories of Identity

The parameters of this submission do not allow for an in-depth presentation of Dr. Wierenga's study results, but the evocative category identifiers are easily recognisable when reading the familiar case studies as presented in both the RRR Review and Strategy Framework. NE Tracks and NELLEN staff can certainly match student names with the Exploring, Wandering, Settling and Retreating groups. The value in the matrix categories is to highlight the necessity of differing policies and strategies for differing cultural orientations of the four-ideal types[vi] and the challenges they face.

Solution Focused Suggestions for **Challenge A** using the 'Young people making a life' matrix

Exploring – will always seek global education and employment opportunities irrespective of what is available in their immediate community.

Wandering – will need support to find articulated pathways, especially when locating the *first* step onto that pathway.

Settling – will accept the local study options and not seek any further learning if there is no immediate motivating demand i.e. unemployment.

Retreating – will not seek *any* study options, irrespective of what locally available pathways exist.

Challenge A: There are fewer study options available in RRR areas

Policy suggestion for Exploring – ten year 'return home' ticket. After a decade of employment post-tertiary study, an incentive and a two-year contract to relocate to a RRR area to 'bring the knowledge back'.

Policy suggestion for Wandering – coordinated VET in Schools to TAFE to university articulated pathways (e.g. NE Tracks LLEN and NELLEN's Workforce Development Model).

Settling – early exposure and participation in School-based apprenticeships and traineeships (Structured Workplace Learning Program and Workforce Development Project)/ post-secondary study tax incentives or rebates for *both* employers and students.

Retreating – local employment champions' tax incentives/ rebates, coordinated through LLENs, Local Government, Chambers of Commerce or an equivalent community organisation with connections to young people and business groups and role models.

NE Tracks and NELLEN's premise for this submission is grounded in knowledge of the variety of education pathways available to a young person, or any community member wishing to extend their education experience. Aside from the obvious engagement with education at primary and secondary school levels, students can access courses and supports through DET funded Learn Locals and Adult Community and Further Education Centres (ACFE), TAFEs, Flexible Learning Centres, and Virtual School Victoria (VSV http://www.distance.vic.edu.au/) and other distance education providers; federally funded universities; commercial Registered Training Organisations (RTO); independently funded U3As; and Department of Health & Human Services funded Neighbourhood/ Community Centres and Men's Sheds.

The myriad of Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathways available to students can be accessed through these already existing organisations within regional North East Victoria. There is no 'new' infrastructure needed to enable enrolment in pre-accredited or accredited training. The current buildings, staff, programs, and committees of management all offer viable and practical options to students in our region. The restriction is the connective tissue between the pathways that enables smooth transitions to the next stage of the education journey (for those who have clear goals – explorers-settlers), the collaborative conversations that connect dots for students who are uncertain about the first step (for wanderers-retreaters), the access to role models who can explain the pathway in ways that are easily understood (of benefit to explorers-wanderers), and the confidence-building experiences that gently introduce students to the concept of 'lifelong learning' (particularly supportive to retreaters).

Investment in modern technology and VET training and industry partnerships are not new suggestions either. The key element in this scenario is the coordination that allows enough time for educators and industry practitioners to 'step away' from the pathway they're involved with to assess its capacity to provide students with an education that can accelerate the transition from full-time study to full-time employment. Accelerating factors to gaining work include "education that builds enterprise skills, being able to undertake relevant paid work experience, finding paid employment in a sector which is growing and an optimistic mindset[vii]."

Opportunities for *local* professional learning opportunities, community of practice networks, and financial incentives that build core understandings of best practice in industry (both new and established) ensure that those in direct contact with students, irrespective of *their* goals and identities, have a mind-set that inspires their student's aspiration and attainment.

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.

Setting policy for students entering tertiary education must consider the point from which students embark on their transition to attain knowledge, skills, networks, growth, wellbeing and agency. Remember, a one-size-fits-all philosophy is a disservice to our students' individual origins and aspirations.

Regional, rural and remote (RRR) communities currently have resources and infrastructure that operate as conveyance columns for students to reach their education destination. Access is possible at 'ground level' and the structure has been created so that student remain on the prepared pathway until they reach the 'penthouse suite'.

The geography, industry and socio-economic factors of discrete communities intermingle with the demographics of residents in RRR environments to create that iconic Australian national legend – *the community that takes care of its own*. And, as ABC's 'Back Roads' has thoroughly captured, the "towns are full of colourful characters whose grit and good humour will continue to uplift and inspire.[viii]"

But sometimes the community doesn't have an abundance of resources, or infrastructure, or inspiring characters to 'take care of its own'. The missing element in these situations is policy that enables the targeted expansion of limited opportunities through *collaboratively* opening doors midway through processes. University of Melbourne's Dr Ani Wierenga has researched the launching place of secondary students in RRR settings and developed a matrix that offers an opportunity to connect current 'best practice' strategies with categories of students. Policies developed from these connections can shorten and strengthen transition journeys. For example, mentorship will assist wandering-retreating types, financial rebates support settling-exploring young people, articulated pathways expand the options for wandering-settling-retreating students.

A suite of policies that matches need with relevant supportive resources is a practical application of this theoretical model. Increasing school-based apprenticeships/traineeships is a natural solution that supports student's experiential learning.

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

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[i] https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/australian-education Accessed 27 January 2019

[ii] Independent Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education—Final Report, Emeritus Professor Dr John Halsey, Commonwealth of Australia, 2018

[iii] Dr. Ani Wierenga https://www.findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person9995 Accessed 27 January 2019

[iv] Young People Making a Life, Dr. Ani Wierenga, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009

[v] *ibid*

[vi] *ibid*

[vii] https://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FYA_TheNewWorkReality_sml.pdf Accessed 1 February 2019

[viii] https://iview.abc.net.au/show/back-roads accessed 1 February 2019