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

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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*	Emeritus Professor
First name*	Andrew
Last name*	Taggart
E-mail address*	███████████
State/Territory*	WA

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

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.

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

Comment: While fewer study options are a reality, innovative strategies for new offerings and alternative teaching and learning modes, can facilitate an expansion of offerings that engage RRR students. In certain states, where there are no regional universities, the problem is exacerbated. The Independent Review into Regional, Rural and remote Education provides both guiding principles and several possible answers to the questions posed. Regional Study Hubs will be crucial in the delivery of an expanded range of course offerings.

1. What opportunities exist to expand options for further study in RRR areas?

    In addition to expanding VET in RRR areas, improving pathways/articulations between VET and universities and enhanced online delivery other opportunities exist:

    1.1 **University MoUs** to ensure a certain range of options across each state (e.g. WAHEC MoU in WA);
    1.2 **Establish pathway/enabling programs** at each regional campus and/or study hub (note: both online and face-to-face versions are available). Pathway Programs provide university entrance for those students achieving a low or no ATAR in year 12 studies, mature-aged students with an interest in university study (e.g. low STAT score), Certificate IV students who do not gain access to their course of choice and other students based on application.
    1.3 **Link course offerings to short course/intensive offerings** and Study Abroad offerings for RRR, international and metropolitan students. Highlight regional research expertise (e.g. marine environment, agriculture, mining) for study, practicum and WIL opportunities.
    1.4 **First-Year Campuses offering Diplomas.** First-year of courses/Diplomas across a range of offerings can grow engagement. Whole course offerings are often not sustainable but the units of many courses in first year serve a number of degrees.

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?

    While VET and universities can always work "better together in RRR areas" there needs to provide incentives and accountabilities to facilitate transfer between the sectors.

    2.1 **An RRR Certificate IV** should articulate with a local course to facilitate transfer. Certificate IVs (with English proficiency) should be universally accepted as entry to university.
    2.2 **One-year Diplomas** can facilitate entry to university so should be priority offerings in RRR areas in conjunction with the First-Year campus.

Challenge B: Relocating RRR students face significant financial, emotional and social challenges

Study Hubs offer a place for scholarship holders. RRR scholarships should go to those most in need. Local students, typically more in financial need than students at boarding school or readily accepting course offers in cities, would benefit most form scholarships at lower levels than the current ones offered so can stay at home and study.

3. What financial supports work best for students from RRR backgrounds, including those who choose to relocate?

3.1 **Target scholarships** to those in need. Students most in need typically do not apply for scholarships so Study Hubs and regional campuses can offer the scholarships to local students.

3.2 **Local scholarships for local students that will grow first-year numbers.** Allocated funds will be less per student and thus can go to more if students are studying locally.

3.3 **Successful completion of Year 1** can then see scholarships funded at a higher level if students transfer from the local campus.

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

4.1 **Targeted scholarships for practicums and internships**. Many students in popular courses such as teaching, and nursing often cannot afford to undertake 10-week programs away from home/families.

4.2 **Intense study periods** at local campuses. Intense 4-6-week study periods where students can complete 2 units in the period. Metropolitan students may be attracted to such offerings.

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

5.1 **Grow the student cohort** to enhance campus life and services.

5.2 **Lower expectations of campus life**. Many students at metropolitan campuses accept that they will spend little time on campus so this needs to be communicated to all RRR students at all campuses.

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?

Aspiration development for all high school students is a complex matter. Aspirations for tertiary education need to commence in year 7 and continue across all years with targeted interventions occurring consistently across the 6 years of high school. Visits to metropolitan campuses are expensive and should not be the most important investment. Aspirations for many years 11 and 12 students are already high. It is the access to and understanding of pathways and the nurturing and support to engage in the process of applying to university and selecting preferences, etc, that are an essential part of supporting aspirations.

6.1 **Develop a comprehensive Years 7-12 'going to uni' program** to build/consolidate aspirations and make the university experience accessible.

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?

Coping with multiple forms of disadvantage requires higher levels of support across aspiration building and consolidation, induction to and retention during the university experience. Keeping such students 'close-to-home' can have benefits so the provision of support services at the local campus and online are necessary.

7.1 **Develop/compile a comprehensive resource package**, across Australia with input from universities with specialisations in support, e.g. Curtin and autism, Deakin and visual impairment, for students with multiple forms of disadvantage.

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

Indigenous students need a larger cohort to build a sense of community. In WA 5% of Year 12 indigenous students (102/1773) gain an ATAR. Access and success will come with higher levels of attainment in NAPLAN and then Years 11 and 12.

8.1 **Develop more enlightened face-to-face and online enabling/pathway programs** for Indigenous students (e.g. Murdoch University KTrack program) that also link with years 11 and 12.

8.2 **Design Indigenous employment targets**, through university Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), for academic and professional staff to be achieved.

Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas

Federal (RDAs) and State Governments (RDCs) allocate resources to achieve these goals. Some universities are central to these discussions. For regions that do not have a university campus a 'whole-of-state' approach should be implemented to ensure all the state's geographical areas are serviced by universities in outreach, recruitment and enrolment. States to achieve this outcome by rationalising outreach and recruitment activities with each university, i.e. universities recruit for all universities, and are allocated under-serviced areas to focus on.

9   How can tertiary education providers further stimulate economic growth in RRR areas?
9.1 **Grow targeted research** in the regions.
9.2 **Recruit international students** to regional Australia.
9.3 **Further incentivise immigration** to regional areas.

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

Some universities 'do it better' than others! Develop case studies of success, beyond what the ICSEA, geographical location would predict.

10.1 **Link research projects** to Regional Study Hubs.
10.2 **Prepare case studies** of high achieving regional universities/campuses.

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

A range of policies around capping of student places, international students and work rights and research projects conducted in a region must link to the local university or campus through a formal collaboration. The current cap on university places could be lifted in regional areas. While this has happened in several locations it has been politically motivated and not strategic, for example, the worst performing regions and the local university, in terms of university participation, should get the 'un-capped' places not already strong large regional universities.

11.1 **Uncap places in selected regions** where under-representation is greatest.

11.2 **Metropolitan universities conducting research** projects in the regions where they do not have a campus must link with the local HE provider.

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?

If the Commissioner has, HE experiences in RRR and has high level collaboration and partnership skills and networking capability with Australian universities then it could be a useful appointment. Terms of Reference and accountability to deliver on an increase in university participation for RRR students would drive performance. This appointee would also need to understand high school achievement and leadership.

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?

KPIs around high school attainment/completion, university pathways and course enrolments and undergraduate degree completions.

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.

While fewer study options are a reality, innovative strategies for new offerings and alternative teaching and learning modes, can facilitate an expansion of offerings that engage RRR students. In certain states, where there are no 'stand-alone' regional universities, the problem is exacerbated. The Independent Review into RRR Education provides both guiding principles and possible answers to the questions posed. Regional Study Hubs will be crucial in the delivery of an expanded range of course offerings.

VET and universities can always work "better together in RRR areas" there needs to be incentives and accountabilities to facilitate transfer between the sectors. As suggested a **RRR Certificate IV** should articulate with a local course to facilitate transfer. Certificate IVs (with English proficiency) should be universally accepted as entry to university. **One-year Diplomas** appeal so should be priority offerings in RRR areas in conjunction with the First-Year University campus option.

A range of policies around un-capping of places, international students and work rights and research projects conducted in a region linking to the local university/campus through a formal collaboration.

Programs to build/consolidate aspirations for tertiary education need to commence in Year 7 and continue across all years with targeted interventions occurring. **Develop a comprehensive Years 7-12 'going to uni' program** to build/consolidate aspirations and make the university experience accessible.

Federal (RDAs) and State Governments (RDCs) allocate resources to achieve these goals. Some universities are central to these discussions. For regions that do not have a university campus a 'whole-of-state' approach should be implemented to ensure all the state's geographical areas are serviced in outreach, recruitment and enrolment. States can achieve this outcome by rationalising outreach and recruitment activities with universities.

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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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