



Australian Government  
Department of Education and Training

# National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy Framing Paper

Regional Education Expert Advisory Group

*December 2018*





# 1. BACKGROUND

## The National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy

Regional, rural and remote (RRR)\* communities make a substantial contribution not only to Australia’s economy, but also our broader social and cultural life. The ongoing efforts of communities and education providers across the continuum of learning are crucial to underpinning this contribution.

Nevertheless, there continues to be a significant disparity in tertiary education outcomes for students from these areas. The Australian Government is developing a National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy (the Strategy) to drive increased participation of RRR students in post-secondary education. Increased performance in post-secondary education generally leads to better overall outcomes for students in terms of income and employment. In addition, increasing the level of post-secondary education attainment in RRR areas can increase the economic prosperity of those communities. Recommendation 11 of the *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education*<sup>1</sup> (IRRRRE) proposed that the Government ‘establish a national focus for regional, rural and remote education, training and research to enhance access, outcomes and opportunities in regional Australia’.

The Strategy will focus on building capacity and aspiration towards tertiary education, developing better educational opportunities and pathways, supporting students to transition from secondary to post-secondary education (including relocation and careers advice), and increasing access and attainment levels in RRR areas.

The Strategy is also aimed at building on existing initiatives that support RRR education, including supporting the performance of regional universities and vocational education providers, enhancing the role of RRR education providers in the economic development of RRR centres, and attracting people to the regions.

## The Expert Advisory Group roles and responsibilities

The Minister for Education has appointed an Expert Advisory Group with expertise and understanding of regional communities’ needs, education and training, economic development and industry engagement. The members of the Expert Advisory Group are:

- The Hon Dr Denis Napthine, former Victorian Premier (Chair)
- Emeritus Professor Peter Lee, former Vice Chancellor Southern Cross University
- Ms Caroline Graham, Chief Executive Officer, Regional Skills Training
- Ms Meredith Wills, former Director, Geraldton Universities Centre.

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\* This paper uses “Regional, Rural and Remote (RRR)” as an umbrella term to characterise the diverse range of non-metropolitan areas across Australia. Where the terms “regional” or “remote” are used, they are referring to specific classes of remoteness under the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), which provides a framework of statistical areas used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and other organisations to provide statistics that are comparable and spatially integrated. There are five classes of remoteness based on their relative access to services: Major cities, Inner regional, Outer regional, Remote and Very remote. While some communities and individuals also identify themselves as “rural”, sometimes in association with particular rural industries such as agriculture, this term is not explicitly defined and does not correspond to any specific class of areas within this framework. From a statistical perspective, the term “Rural” is used to describe any population not contained in an Urban Centre or Locality. For more information on the Remoteness Structure see the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 5 - Remoteness Structure](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Australian+Statistical+Geography+Standard+(ASGS)) publication ([http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Australian+Statistical+Geography+Standard+\(ASGS\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Australian+Statistical+Geography+Standard+(ASGS)))

The Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Group are to:

- 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.

The Expert Advisory Group will engage with selected stakeholders including national peak professional organisations, education authorities, universities and vocational education and training (VET) providers. These consultations will inform the development of an interim report, due end of March 2019, and a final report due end of June 2019. The final report will make priority recommendations, and put forward a Strategy for action over the longer term.

### **The process for developing the Strategy**

This Framing Paper is the first step in developing the Strategy. The purpose of this paper is to highlight areas the Expert Advisory Group plans to focus on and to draw out practical policy suggestions.

Past reviews by federal and state governments have clearly identified the many challenges that RRR students face which often contribute to lower levels of post-secondary participation and attainment. The Expert Advisory Group aims to focus on a number of high priority issues and challenges, and to develop targeted recommendations to help RRR students achieve higher levels of post-secondary education in the short- and long-term.

The Expert Advisory Group is seeking action-orientated responses to the challenges and key questions identified in this paper. Your responses to the Framing Paper should focus on practical steps the Government could take to improve tertiary education access and attainment of people from RRR backgrounds. Please email your responses to [regionalstrategy@education.gov.au](mailto:regionalstrategy@education.gov.au) by **5:00pm (AEDT)** on **1 February 2019**.

This Framing Paper, and stakeholder responses to it, will inform a series of Key Issues Papers. The Expert Advisory Group plans to release Key Issues Papers in February.

## 2. THE PROBLEM

Tertiary education attainment in regional and remote areas has grown significantly over the last decade. Nevertheless, there remains a significant disparity in outcomes between RRR and metropolitan areas. Around 54 per cent of people in major cities have a Certificate IV or above qualification, compared to 33 per cent in regional areas and 26 per cent in remote areas. In major cities, around 40 per cent of people have a bachelor degree or higher, compared to 20 per cent in regional areas and less than 17 per cent in remote areas<sup>2</sup>.

While university participation and attainment is higher in cities than in regional and remote areas, the opposite is the case in VET. In 2017, 22 per cent of 15 to 64 year olds living in cities were enrolled in VET, growing to 30 per cent in inner regional areas, 31 per cent in outer regional areas and 36 per cent in remote areas<sup>3</sup>. The association between remoteness and VET attainment reflects proportionately greater provision of lower-level vocational education qualifications in RRR areas<sup>4</sup>.

Where a young Australian grows up influences their educational attainment<sup>5</sup>. Even when controlling for differences in Australian Tertiary Admission Ranking (ATAR) scores, regional students are five per cent less likely to attend university than those from metropolitan areas<sup>6</sup>. Compared to those who grow up in cities, young Australians from regional areas are around half as likely to have a university qualification or higher-level VET qualification by their mid-twenties<sup>7</sup>. When students from regional and remote backgrounds do undertake university study, they are less likely to graduate than metropolitan students (60 per cent for remote students, 69 per cent for regional students and 75 per cent for metropolitan)<sup>8</sup>.

These outcomes are, in part, driven by poorer education outcomes generally, starting in early childhood and school. In some RRR areas, there is limited access to high quality early childhood education, which can lead to reduced educational and economic outcomes later in life<sup>9</sup>. Gaps in learning widen throughout schooling, with metropolitan students making greater learning gains across schooling compared to regional and remote students<sup>10</sup>. By the time they reach fifteen years of age, students in metropolitan areas are around twelve months of learning ahead of students in regional areas and eighteen months ahead of students in remote areas. In addition, 78 per cent of students in major cities complete Year 12 or equivalent by the age of 19, falling to 64 per cent in inner regional areas and 43 per cent in very remote regions<sup>11</sup>. Those that do finish Year 12 and go onto university typically have lower ATAR scores<sup>12</sup>.

At the same time, there can be many advantages to being educated in RRR areas. Living in RRR communities can offer great education opportunities in schooling, higher education and vocational training. The experience of living in regional communities also affords opportunities to develop practical and interpersonal skills, together with resilience and ingenuity, that enable future professional success. For example, people from regional backgrounds are strongly represented in leadership positions in Australian businesses – 38 per cent of Australian Chief Executive Officers of ASX 100 companies grew up in regional Australia<sup>13</sup>.

There is no single reason why RRR students have different tertiary education outcomes to their metropolitan peers. Rather, students from RRR backgrounds encounter various obstacles and challenges that those in metropolitan areas typically do not. While many RRR students overcome these challenges through support from others and perseverance, many do not.

A major challenge facing RRR students is that there are fewer higher education providers located in RRR areas, which often means students need to relocate for further studies. Regional students are twice as likely as metropolitan students to move away for university<sup>14</sup>. The social dislocation,

emotional and financial costs of moving away from family and social support networks can place a significant burden on students and their families<sup>15</sup>.

In contrast, some level of VET services is available in most areas, with VET playing a vital role in underpinning access to tertiary education, including through VET in schools and other schools-based pathways. However, service offerings vary significantly across regions. In some areas, there are very limited opportunities to progress onto higher-level vocational qualifications, or to access articulation processes that recognise prior learning if students want to pursue higher education.

The lower likelihood of students from RRR areas undertaking university study does not simply reflect lesser opportunities. Differences in students' aspirations also play a role. While university applicants from regional areas are more likely to receive an offer, they are less likely to accept it (70 per cent compared to 77 per cent for metropolitan students)<sup>16</sup>. For many RRR students, VET is a great choice and the appropriate pathway to the economic opportunities and jobs available in their local communities. The skills gained through vocational training are in demand in many rural industries, such as agriculture, tourism and mining. Furthermore, students may prefer to pursue opportunities in trades, which can provide more immediate financial benefits, or in other sectors where VET qualifications are important such as health and community services. Consequently, there is a need to support education opportunities across the full spectrum of vocational training and higher education, so that RRR students can pursue the careers and lives they most highly value.

### 3. THE CHALLENGES

There are five major challenges particularly important in addressing the lower levels of access and attainment in tertiary education for students from RRR backgrounds.

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

The first is how to build on the current range of innovative models for delivering tertiary education outside our major cities, to support a range of models and pathways that meet the diverse needs of RRR communities and industries.

A sparse continent and population that primarily clusters in cities creates challenges in the delivery of tertiary education across Australia. RRR areas often do not have the population density to sustain extensive tertiary options. The lack of access to study options contributes to declining participation rates in both university and higher-level vocational study as regions become more remote. Compared to those in very remote areas, people living in major cities are four times as likely to participate in university, and twice as likely to participate in higher-level vocational training<sup>17</sup>.

**Putting the challenge in context.**  
Victoria has easily the highest population density of Australian states. Even though the state is relatively small for Australia, regional Victorians need to travel significant distances to access educational opportunities. For the 739 residents of Hopetoun, the closest tertiary education opportunities are in Horsham, an 80-minute drive away. In Horsham, there are a number of vocational training options and a Federation University campus offers bachelor degrees in Social Sciences and Business. La Trobe University offers a wider range of bachelor degree options, but the campuses in Mildura and Bendigo are approximately 120 minutes and 160 minutes away by car.

Currently, access to higher education is provided through a range of different service types and locations, including metropolitan-based universities and their regional campuses, regionally based universities, and Regional Study Hubs. Regional Study Hubs support students to study courses by distance, by providing access to study support and infrastructure in RRR areas.

A key issue is how to build on the important role of VET in RRR areas to further improve outcomes for students. An important pathway for boosting university attainment for students in RRR areas is through articulation or transfer arrangements between VET and higher education. Students from

regional backgrounds are twice as likely as metropolitan students to have completed VET courses before enrolling in university (16 per cent of students compared to 8 per cent)<sup>18</sup>. However, articulation arrangements are not consistent across the sector and vary between institutions.

VET delivered in schools provides another pathway to tertiary education and employment opportunities, often drawing on partnerships between schools, local industry and the VET sector. At the same time, there is a range of challenges, including how to promote more consistent quality and access across Australia.

Provision of online learning is another way to enhance education access in RRR areas. Regional students are more likely to engage in off-campus university study than those in metropolitan areas<sup>19</sup>. While online provision gives greater opportunities, challenges specific to RRR areas such as unreliable internet access and social isolation can significantly reduce its effectiveness.

## **Challenge B: Financial, emotional and social challenges for students who relocate**

There is substantial mobility between our cities and RRR areas, which has major economic and social benefits for Australia. However, moving can involve significant costs and other pressures for students and their families. To pursue wider opportunities in education, students often need to relocate. In 2014, 57 per cent of regional students relocated for university studies compared to 27 per cent of metropolitan students<sup>20</sup>.

The cost of tertiary education and expenses associated with living away from home are significant barriers to participation and completion for RRR students<sup>21</sup>. For students who relocate to attend university, the associated living costs can double the cost of a higher education degree<sup>22</sup>. These costs affect student aspirations. Regional students who are from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds are twice as likely to perceive the cost of university fees as prohibitive<sup>23</sup>.

### **Putting the challenge in context.**

Relocating for further study imposes large challenges for some RRR students. For example, a student from the regional city of Karratha, WA faces a sixteen-hour drive to the University of Western Australia. A student could stay at a university residential college where fees are approximately \$20,000 for nine months of accommodation. Alternatively, spending a relatively modest budget of \$300 per week for rent, transport, food and utilities for twelve months comes to \$15,600 per year. Any time that student wants to return to Karratha to visit friends and family they are looking at prices for the two-hour return flight starting at around \$650.

For those students who are able to relocate, relocating and living away from home results in financial and emotional challenges<sup>24</sup>. Students from regional backgrounds are almost twice as likely as those from metropolitan backgrounds to report financial stress due to the associated costs of relocating (44 per cent compared to 24 per cent) even when relocating to a regional university<sup>25</sup>.

There are also emotional costs of relocating for study. Moving away from home not only means leaving behind friends and family, but also poses the challenge of building a new social and support network. Regional students are also more likely to consider withdrawing early from university (25 per cent, compared to 19 per cent of metropolitan students), and cite emotional health as the main reason for doing so due to separation from their support networks<sup>26</sup>.

At the same time, moving to a new physical, social and cultural environment can lead to social dislocation. Regional students are more likely to be the first in their family to attend university (37 per cent compared to 27 per cent of metropolitan students)<sup>27</sup>, and so may take longer to feel they belong on campus. Those from RRR schools may also not know any other students at their university to assist with their initial transition on campus. These factors contribute to 10 per cent of regional students and 15 per cent of remote students dropping out of university before the commencement of second

year, compared to 8 per cent of metropolitan students<sup>28</sup>. Throughout their tertiary studies and beyond, students from RRR backgrounds may also grapple with how their worldview and interests diverge from that of their friends and families who remain in their home community.

### **Challenge C: Raising aspirations for tertiary education**

Students from RRR areas tend to have different education aspirations. For example, students from regional backgrounds are 10 per cent less likely to have plans to attend university than metropolitan students, after controlling for SES<sup>29</sup>.

Students from RRR areas are more likely to choose VET study options. In some cases, differences in aspirations reflect positive choices to pursue employment opportunities in particular occupations or industries relevant to the needs of their local communities.

In other cases, however, it may reflect negative student perceptions of their prospects of getting into a university or successfully completing a university degree. One reason may be less exposure to role models who have obtained higher-level qualifications. The proportion of people in major cities holding a university degree is approximately double that in regional areas, and triple that of people in remote areas<sup>30</sup>. Furthermore, there is a tendency for regional communities to focus more on helping young people find employment rather than considering higher education as a pathway<sup>31</sup>.

Another factor influencing university participation is that most RRR students do not live near universities as they grow up. A study of rural and regional student experiences found that where a regional university has a physical presence in a particular location, there was an increase in educational aspirations and overall participation in higher education in the regional areas surrounding the campus<sup>32</sup>. The expectations of parents also differs between metropolitan and regional areas<sup>33</sup>.

A further factor is potential lack of information of available study and career options, and opportunities to pursue relevant pathways into higher level VET and higher education courses.

### **Challenge D: RRR students often face multiple forms of disadvantage**

Other characteristics that are associated with lower access and attainment at a tertiary level compound the effects of regional disadvantage<sup>34</sup>. Regional students are more likely to be from low SES households, from Indigenous backgrounds, older, studying part time, and/or the first in their family to attend university<sup>35</sup>. Each of these characteristics presents its own challenges, but they combine to make studying more difficult for students from these equity groups. For example, some research notes that socio-economic status is a critical factor influencing the higher education participation and attainment of regional students<sup>36</sup>. Other studies propose that particular attention should be paid to male students in regional and remote locations, because their under-representation in higher education is more severe than that of the female regional and remote population<sup>37</sup>.

The factors that primarily affect equity cohorts such as financial stress, isolation, and work commitments further harm the emotional health and wellbeing of regional students. Students from equity groups are significantly more likely than metropolitan students to cite emotional health as a reason for considering deferring or withdrawing from university (84 per cent and 66 per cent respectively)<sup>38</sup>.

## **Challenge E: Attracting people and jobs to RRR areas**

Australia has a number of thriving regional universities and campuses, that not only contribute to developing skilled workers to drive the economy in their communities, but also national prosperity more generally. Graduates of regional universities tend to enjoy better employment and economic outcomes. After graduation 76 per cent of regional graduates have full-time work, compared to 71 per cent in the cities<sup>39</sup>, with many working in regional areas<sup>40</sup>. Moreover, during their studies, students at regional universities report high levels of satisfaction with their university experience<sup>41</sup>.

Despite these better outcomes, regional communities sometimes struggle to attract university students and graduates. Addressing this challenge by strengthening regional universities could create a virtuous cycle where more people and potential entrepreneurs are attracted to RRR communities, which in turn may attract more employers and job opportunities to the area.

Further strengthening the capacity of regional universities and supporting their research capabilities is part of this challenge. Attracting more students and researchers to regional areas has the potential to drive growth in high-skilled jobs, and so reduce the disparity in post-secondary educational attainment between people in RRR and metropolitan areas. Universities Australia has highlighted the role of universities in growing and keeping jobs in regional areas. From 2004 to 2011, start-ups contributed 90 per cent of Australia's net positive job creation, with university graduates founding 80 per cent of Australian start-ups<sup>42</sup>. More high-skilled jobs in RRR areas would mean fewer university graduates having to move to metropolitan areas to work in the area of their university degree. Currently, young people from regional backgrounds who complete a university degree are twice as likely to migrate to cities as those who complete a certificate level qualification<sup>43</sup>.

Australia's highest ranked research universities are generally located in metropolitan areas. Global university rankings involve a range of methodological issues and do not necessarily provide a reliable indicator of capacity to meet the educational and other needs of students from RRR areas. Student and academic perceptions of their reputations nevertheless play a role in the net movement of people from RRR areas. While a range of factors complicate international comparisons of regional universities, examples from the United Kingdom and the United States also highlight the role that regional universities can play in attracting people to their local communities.

Another opportunity for regional education providers is to attract more international students. In 2017-18, international education contributed \$32.4 billion to the Australian economy<sup>44</sup>. International students studying in regional Australia report higher levels of satisfaction and community engagement than international students in metropolitan areas do. They also have lower living and study costs<sup>45</sup>. Despite the benefits of studying in RRR areas, 97 per cent of international students study in Australia's major cities<sup>46</sup>.

### **Putting the challenge in context.**

United Kingdom and United States have top ranked universities in regional areas. In the United Kingdom, famous examples are Oxford and Cambridge, but there are highly regarded universities in other areas such as Warwick and Durham. In the United States, top universities like Cornell (Ithaca, New York), University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, Michigan) and Dartmouth (Hanover, New Hampshire) are located in regional cities and towns. By attracting students and researchers to their towns, these universities support local jobs and sprout businesses that helped grow the local economy and population over time. While some of these university towns have grown to have larger populations than most Australian regional centres, they provide insights into how universities can influence their local communities and help drive significant growth in the local population over time.

## **Challenge F: Implementing and monitoring a national strategy**

The National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy will provide a framework to address the challenges that prevent people from RRR communities from accessing and completing tertiary education.

Australia is a large and sparsely populated country and there is a complex range of different systems and players, including various levels of government, involved in the delivery of education services. Australian communities and industries also have their own particular education and training needs, meaning different approaches are needed for different contexts. Individual communities, industries, the education sector and governments have supported a range of initiatives over recent years that have made a positive difference and have helped to lift access and attainment rates. However, achieving greater national coherence across these activities remains an ongoing challenge.

Consequently, as well as identifying practical immediate actions and long-term strategies that can make a real difference to outcomes for students and communities, it will be important to consider how to implement new initiatives effectively in a way that complements current effort, and how to best monitor the success of the Strategy.

To bring together this effort and oversee implementation of the Strategy, the Halsey Review floated the idea of appointing an independent Commissioner, similar to the approach taken in health with the establishment of a National Rural Health Commissioner. Other issues to be considered as part of implementation arrangements include what goals and targets should be set, for example around educational attainment, over the life of the Strategy.

## 4. KEY QUESTIONS

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?

## References

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- <sup>2</sup> Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018) Internal Analysis based on the Australian Census of Population and Housing. 2016 (accessed through Census TableBuilder), Australian Government, Canberra.
- <sup>3</sup> National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2018) Australian vocational education and training statistics: total VET students and courses 2017 – data slicer; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Census – Counting Persons, Place of Usual Residence 2016 (accessed through Census TableBuilder).
- <sup>4</sup> In 2017, 28 per cent of enrolments in major cities were Certificate IV and above, with the proportion falling in inner regional (22 per cent), outer regional (19 per cent), remote (18 per cent) and very remote (13 per cent) areas. Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018) Internal extract of unpublished NCVET data, Total VET students and courses 2014-17 – program enrolments. Australian Government, Canberra.
- <sup>5</sup> Baik, C., Naylor, R. & Arkoudis, S. (2015) [The first year experience in Australian universities: Findings from two decades, 1994-2014](#). Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, p. 78.
- <sup>6</sup> Cardak, B., Brett, M., Bowden, M., Vecci, J., Barry, P., Bahsevanoglou, J. and McAllister, R. (2017) [Regional Student Participation and Migration: Analysis of factors influencing regional student participation and internal migration in Australian higher education](#). National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. Curtin University, Perth, p. v.
- <sup>7</sup> Twelve per cent of students from regional areas have a university qualification by this stage, compared to 22 per cent of people from metropolitan areas. Furthermore, an advanced diploma or diploma is the highest level of qualification for 4.8 per cent of students from regional backgrounds, compared to 7.4 per cent of students from metropolitan backgrounds. Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018) Internal Analysis based on the Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset, 2011-2016. Australian Government, Canberra.
- <sup>8</sup> Pollard, L. (2018) Remote Student University Success – An Analysis of Policy and Practice. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Curtin University, Perth, p. 6; Cardak et al., 2017 (p. v) also find regional and remote students are on average 6 per cent less likely than metropolitan students to graduate from university.
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- <sup>10</sup> Goss, P., Sonnemann, J., Chisholm, C. & Nelson, L. (2016) Widening gaps: what NAPLAN tells us about student progress. Grattan Institute, Melbourne.
- <sup>11</sup> Lamb, S., Jackson, J., Walstab, A. & Huo, S. (2015) [Educational opportunity in Australia 2015: Who succeeds and who misses out](#). Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University, for the Mitchell Institute, Mitchell Institute, Melbourne, p. 42. Cardak et al., 2017 (p. v) also find that when controlling for SES, regional students are 7.0 per cent less likely to complete high school than their metropolitan counterparts after controlling for SES.
- <sup>12</sup> Interdepartmental Committee on Access to Higher Education for Regional and Remote Students (2015) Final advice and findings. Australian Government, Canberra, p. 8.
- <sup>13</sup> Australian Financial Review (2014) [Country kids are born CEOs](#). 11 September 2014 edition, Fairfax Media, Melbourne.
- <sup>14</sup> Baik et al., 2015, p. 80.
- <sup>15</sup> Cardak et al., 2017, p. 7.
- <sup>16</sup> Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018) [Undergraduate applications, offers and acceptances](#). Australian Government, Canberra, p. 34.
- <sup>17</sup> In major cities, 7 per cent of 15-64 year olds participate in higher education, compared to 6 per cent in inner regional, 5 per cent in outer regional, 4 per cent in remote and 2 per cent in very remote areas. In major cities, 28 per cent of VET enrolments are Certificate IV or above, compared to 22 per cent in inner regional, 19 per cent in outer regional, 18 in remote and 13 per cent of very remote areas. Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018) internal extract of unpublished NCVET data, Total VET students and courses 2014-2017 – program enrolments; Higher education statistics, unpublished; ABS, 2016, Census – Counting Persons, Place of Usual Residence 2016 (accessed through Census TableBuilder), Australian Government, Canberra.
- <sup>18</sup> Baik et al., 2015, p. 79.
- <sup>19</sup> Richardson, S. & Friedman, T. (2010) Australian Regional Higher Education: Student characteristics and experiences. Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, p. 62.
- <sup>20</sup> Baik et al., 2015, p. 80.
- <sup>21</sup> Halsey, 2018, pp. 59-64.
- <sup>22</sup> Godden, N. (2007) Regional young people and youth allowance: Access to tertiary education. Centre for Rural Social Research, Wagga Wagga, cited in Cardak et al., 2017, p. 6.
- <sup>23</sup> James, R., Baldwin, G., & McInnis, C. (1999) Which university?: The factors influencing the choices of prospective undergraduates Evaluations and Investigations Program Report 99/3. Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra, cited in Cardak et al., 2015, p. 6.
- <sup>24</sup> Cardak et al., 2017, p. 7.
- <sup>25</sup> Baik et al., 2015, p. 79.
- <sup>26</sup> Baik et al., 2015, pp. 79-80.
- <sup>27</sup> Baik et al., 2015, p. 78.
- <sup>28</sup> Edwards, D., & McMillan, J. (2015) Completing university in Australia: A cohort analysis exploring equity group outcomes. Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, p. 7.
- <sup>29</sup> Cardak et al., 2017, p. v.
- <sup>30</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Census – Employment Income and Education, and Counting Persons, Place of Usual Residence 2016 (accessed through Census TableBuilder). Australian Government, Canberra.
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- <sup>32</sup> Charles Sturt University (2009) Submission to the Inquiry into Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities. Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, p. 13.
- <sup>33</sup> Cardak et al., 2017, p. 9.
- <sup>34</sup> James, R., Bexley, E., Anderson, A., Devlin, M., Garnett, R., Marginson, S., & Maxwell, L. (2008) Participation and equity: A review of the participation in higher education of people from low socioeconomic backgrounds and indigenous people. Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, pp. 2-7.
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