



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.

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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*

Mr

First name*

Trevor

Last name*

Budge

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

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.

Submission to Expert Advisory Group

National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy Framing Paper

To: regionalstrategy@education.gov.au

This submission is made by Trevor Budge – [REDACTED]

How this submission has been conceived and developed

It has been informed by discussions over a considerable period of time between a collective of people from a range of organisations including:

- City of Greater Bendigo
- Goldfields Local Learning Employment Network
- Bendigo TAFE
- Bendigo Campus La Trobe University
- Bendigo Tech School
- Bendigo Manufacturing Group
- Various Bendigo Schools
- Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership
- Be.Bendigo – the Bendigo Business Council
- Bendigo Bank

The views expressed do not represent the views of the above organisations, although many of the comments and sentiments represent widely expressed positions which are frequently shared in Bendigo.

The Strong Themes of this Submission.

1. Fundamental change is needed if the goals of reducing the ‘education gap’ and disadvantage between rural, regional and remote Australia (RRR Australia) and metropolitan Australia are to be delivered.

There have been countless Inquiries by state and federal governments into the general disadvantages faced by people and communities in rural, regional and remote Australia (RRR Australia). Disadvantage and low participation rates in upper secondary and tertiary education have been a recurring theme of the findings of these Inquiries and have been the subject of their own Inquiries. People living in RRR Australia are tired of making submissions to these Inquiries because basically nothing changes. It’s clear that ‘business as usual’ doesn’t work. A few minor tweaks here, a pilot study there, or a one off grant for a new program isn’t cutting it any more. Disillusionment with the lack of any progress is strong. It is submitted that root and branch fundamental transformative change is needed. Simply perpetuating the current structures, policies and centralised approach will not fundamentally change anything.

2. The existing post-secondary education model in Australia will simply not deliver the changes that are needed to bridge the gap between RRR Australia and metropolitan areas.

We need a network of regional post-secondary education providers that are sufficiently resourced to provide the programs and support structures that will bridge the gap. An equity funding approach should look at need and ask ‘where do we intervene to progressively shift the balance to overcome

the disadvantages'? Australian post-secondary education is captured by the 'sandstone institutions' who have almost totally turned their back on any direct support for people in regions. If any person in RRR Australia aspires to undertake the highest levels of education and training in Australia they are virtually always required to relocate to metropolitan areas and live in the most sought after highest cost locations.

While it is not a panacea for the issues that have been raised by this Inquiry and countless others, people and communities in RRR Australia look jealously to countries like NZ, Canada, UK, USA and parts of Europe where they see prestigious institutions and courses located in regions. Institutions which are actively working to build their regional economy because they are embedded in it. Institutions which are located in regional locations and are actively committed to enabling their region and their regional city to 'punch way above their weight' at a national and even international level. Even a cursory glance at places like; Otago University and Polytechnic in Dunedin and Massey in Palmerston North in NZ, Queens in Kingston Canada, the two amazing Universities in Dundee Scotland and the extraordinary role that state universities in regional centres across the USA play demonstrates how the Australian policy setting that continues to focus investment, research and program offerings in half a dozen large cities in Australia perpetuates the disadvantages in RRR Australia. There is little point constantly discussing the disadvantages of education for RRR Australia if the whole structure of delivery is a considerable reason for the widening gap between metro and RRR is not on the agenda.

3. Centralised policies, practices and programs perpetuate the current disadvantages.

Institutions are required to work within the systems that they are part of. They can apply for funds that are made available through grants and initiatives, participate in pilots, and advocate within the rules and structures. They are required to operate within the strictures of the systems that create them. This is immensely frustrating for those who live and work in RRR Australia generally and for those within these systems specifically, because they see the gaps and disadvantages being perpetuated by the systems within which they operate. Centralised systems, whether national or state, with 'one size fits all' policies, programs and initiatives - conceived, coordinated and managed centrally – have no respect for the variations and differences that exist across RRR Australia. Many people and organisations in RRR Australia have come to the realisation that little is likely to change under the current structures. They have realised that the way to change outcomes is not to rely on centrally driven policies and programs but in fact to put aside the structures that the system imposes and to self-determine a course of action based on capitalising on the assets that the region possesses to tackle the issues that the region faces. Because the assets and strengths don't lie in the current structures and systems, regions are looking to what they possess that they can turn to their advantage. Fundamentally their strength is the capacity at the local level to collaborate across all the parts of the system using the networks and goodwill that exist between people, and organisations. Their capacity is to see beyond the systems and structures that are imposed on them and recognise that collaboration for a common cause – overcoming the disadvantages which are imposed on their community – is their unique attribute. Levels of collaboration in RRR Australia are possible way beyond those seen in large metropolitan settings.

4. The Bendigo approach to addressing the education issues which lie at the heart of RRR Australia

Bendigo, similar to all regions and regional cities across Australia, has numerous organisations charged with delivering components of education and training. The structures that exist and are imposed by centralised arrangements perpetuate silos when it comes to tackling disparities and disadvantage. The capacity to overcome the silos is strong in the regions because locally formed collaborative networks are not only possible but they are often the only way to make progress. For many people in these organisations their allegiance to a local sense of place is stronger than their allegiance to the organisational structures they work within. When these people come together they talk and agree about the way forward not from the perspective of their organisation but from

the capacity to collectively address the problem and conceive solutions that not only blur boundaries but cross them. They develop programs and initiatives that are the result of extraordinary collaboration. This submission doesn't suggest that Bendigo has found something unique – it uses Bendigo examples because this is what is known. From what we understand similar grass roots collaborations occur in many other parts of RRR Australia. However, having said that many of the initiatives that are referred to in Bendigo are unique and there are lessons for other places in what Bendigo is doing. Here are some examples from Bendigo:

An example of a highly effective, inclusive, cross-sectoral and unique group in Bendigo is the Bendigo Education Council. This comprises the Principals of all primary, secondary and tertiary institutions whether Government, Catholic or Independent. In what is understood to be a unique collaboration, the bringing together of all education sectors into a regular forum facilitates opportunities to approach issues and challenges as a shared agenda. In one sense this represents the strength of a regionally based approach. Such a collaboration in a metropolitan setting is difficult to imagine.

In the Bendigo region local stakeholders in education, industry, local government and relevant enterprises have formed and demonstrated a critical mass of capability and a capacity to work together on a range of initiatives. Early intervention in work and workplace education is considered important in Bendigo to instil aspiration for the world of work. Regions have fewer career pathways than metropolitan areas. However, knowledge and experience related to local industries and pathways is readily available. The Bendigo Manufacturing Group (a wide range of major employers that have been working together with the City of Greater Bendigo and many education and training providers for 18 Years), the Australian Industry Group, the economic development unit of the City of Greater Bendigo and the Goldfields LLEN have worked with education providers at primary, secondary and tertiary to profile, scan and project current and future skills requirements. Highly successful programs such as; Passions and Pathways (see later description), Young Ambassadors (early career practitioners and graduates mentor students in the world of work who provide a continuum of learning and contribution), , Career Horizons (joining up students and work places), and CityStudio (a first for Australia – a unique collaboration between the City and La Trobe Bendigo based on a highly successful north American program which originated in Vancouver), have demonstrated outstanding levels of collaboration to assist in transitioning students into the world of work.

A progressive measure that is working to identify skills shortages in the engineering and manufacturing sector in central Victoria is the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership's Regional Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Skills Road Map (REAM). REAM is identifying short and long-term initiatives to support future advanced manufacturing workforce needs, articulation of pathways and initiatives for school leavers and a mature age workforce, and the identification of industry/business and influencers.

The connection of industries to universities in regions and the growth of regional research profiles are an often overlooked opportunity in RRR Australia. The evidence from the Bendigo region is that the links between industries and universities is far greater than simply to the universities located in the region. The RRR framing paper mentions the importance of R&D in creating jobs in regions but the paper is short on understanding the scale of the existing links and the potential to build on the existing links nationally and internationally. For example, in Bendigo, major advanced manufacturers have research projects with a dozen universities throughout Australia and in one case an 'ivy league' university in the US. In total these research projects are worth millions of dollars.

Collaboration in Bendigo is linking the city with R&D at a global scale. La Trobe University – Bendigo, the City of Greater Bendigo, the Bendigo Manufacturing Group and Coliban Water have formed a collaborative international R&D partnership to drive innovation and regional jobs creation with their networking with the German based Fraunhofer Institute and specifically the Fraunhofer IESE in Kaiserslautern – one the Fraunhofer's 72 research institutes across Germany and part of its 2Billion Euro enterprise. Kaiserslautern is a similar size to Bendigo and has been able to grow 10,000 jobs in engineering software over two decades as the city transformed its economy and workforce. Federal

assistance and funding are needed to further these sorts of international R&D partnerships. Bendigo is now well-positioned to take the formal step establish a Fraunhofer R&D facility, but it requires significant seed funding to proceed.

Passions and Pathways was conceived by industry and facilitated by the Goldfields LLEN, this program enables primary age students from inter-generationally disadvantaged communities in Bendigo to engage in immersive experiences in the 'world of work' supported by 60 business/industry partners. This program has been so successful that the state has extended its funding for a further 4 years and widened its scope in the region. Components include: work safety preparation; classroom visits by Young Industry Ambassadors; workplace tours; taster workshops at La Trobe University Bendigo; workplace projects in-situ; and an expo to showcase learning outcomes (bit.ly/2018passionsexpo); and www.passionsandpathways.org.au

The development of Greater Bendigo's new Economic Strategy further epitomises this collaborative approach. Eight key organisations have joined forces to develop the Strategy

- City of Greater Bendigo
- Bendigo and Adelaide Bank
- Bendigo Education Council
- Bendigo Health
- Be.Bendigo
- Coliban Water
- Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation
- Loddon–Campaspe Regional Partnership

The Strategy is working to deliver greater liveability, more Inclusive growth, better Jobs for a sustainable future, raising skill levels and tackling climate change because it impacts economic growth and impacts the most on the most vulnerable. Collectively these eight organisations have accepted that these are mutually owned problems and the respective CEOs will sign off on the Strategy and accept the challenge of jointly resolving them. Specific to our educational future the Economic Strategy will

- increase prosperity and deliver more inclusive growth by increasing incomes and uplifting skills and employment opportunities for all our communities and residents so they can live happy, healthy, fulfilled and prosperous lives, and
- bring key stakeholders together, inspiring a shared vision for the whole City by enabling collaboration and providing a platform for collective responsibility in the implementation and delivery of agreed outcomes.

The Strategy places a strong emphasis on retaining existing jobs while securing future employment, diversifying the local and regional economic base. It will enhance education and training opportunities, particularly those relevant to the new economy.

In the emerging new economy, new skills are in demand while old skills are being made redundant. Climate change is now more than a 'disruptor': it threatens our economy, our way of life and our future prosperity. The social and economic divide between those who are marginalised by change and those who are equipped to deal with it is widening. Understanding these key issues is the first step in developing a strategy to tackle them. As a regional city that takes a collaborative approach, we have an advantage and a unique opportunity to address these challenges as a whole community and effect meaningful change.

There is a significant and widening gap between those in the community who are equipped to embrace change and those who are not – with people, households and communities already being left behind. Those without the skills or the capacity to acquire them are being marginalised in their

job prospects, wealth and opportunities are not shared, and an increasing number of people are unable to break out of this cycle of disadvantage and disengagement. At the same time, environmental challenges made greater by climate change pose a huge risk to our economic performance and the liveability of Greater Bendigo.

Conclusion

All of the examples above recognise common principles that places in RRR Australia share.

- Common agenda: a shared vision which results from a mutual understanding of the problem and an agreed agenda for its solution
- Shared measurement system: an agreed set of key indicators to measure performance.
- Mutually reinforcing activities: a set of coordinated activities defined in a joint plan of action.
- Continuous communication: processes to keep all stakeholders informed.

On a national and international scale, Bendigo is a relatively small city. We can use this to our advantage because we have the capacity to collectively embrace these challenges, mobilise our resources and our community to seriously address them. Collaboration is in our DNA, and our networks of people and organisations give us a comparative advantage on the national and international stage.

Education and training as structured and currently delivered in RRR Australia is doomed to perpetuate the disadvantages that have long been identified. The collaborative opportunities that regional settings provide are great sources of innovation and initiative. The capacity of regional settings to devise their own solutions should be seed funded and not stifled by centralised policies, programs and processes. The progress that Bendigo has made has largely been driven by a willingness of people and organisations to operate outside their comfort zone, take risks and look for solutions through a collaborative approach. These endeavours need to be recognised, celebrated and resourced for their capacity to overcome disadvantage and the lack of opportunities created by the structures and strictures within which providers are forced to work.

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.

Education and training as structured and currently delivered in RRR Australia is doomed to perpetuate the disadvantages that have long been identified. The collaborative opportunities that regional settings provide are great sources of innovation and initiative. The capacity of regional settings to devise their own solutions should be seed funded and not stifled by centralised policies, programs and processes. The progress that Bendigo has made has largely been driven by a willingness of people and organisations to operate outside their comfort zone, take risks and look for solutions through a collaborative approach. These endeavours need to be recognised, celebrated and resourced for their capacity to overcome disadvantage and the lack of opportunities created by the structures and strictures within which providers are forced to work.

Privacy Notice and Terms and Conditions for Submissions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Privacy policy and contact

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