

## Terms of Reference

### Regional Education Commissioner

#### Overview

The Australian Government recognises students in regional, rural and remote areas face challenges and barriers to accessing high quality education and successfully transitioning to employment.

The *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* (Halsey Review) found the key challenge for regional, rural and remote education is ensuring every young person has access to high quality schooling and opportunities, regardless of location or circumstances.

The *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy* (Naphthine Review) found individuals living in regional, rural and remote areas are less than half as likely as their city counterparts to obtain a university degree by the time they are 35. This has a significant effect on the ability of people living in regional areas to pursue their choice in career and limits their lifetime earnings.

Recommendation 7, Action 32 of the Naphthine Review recommended establishing a Regional Education Commissioner (the Commissioner) to support effective implementation of the Naphthine Review through partnerships and coordinate efforts across governments, local communities, education providers and employers. The Commissioner will bring together the efforts of Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to provide an ongoing national focus on regional, rural and remote education outcomes.

The Commissioner will have a broad remit across a student's educational lifespan, from early childhood education and care to higher education, and will provide a national focus for regional, rural and remote education.

The primary goal of the Commissioner is to at least halve the disparity in tertiary education outcomes between regional and metropolitan students by 2030.

#### Key duties and responsibilities

- Be a champion for regional, rural and remote education, keeping issues at the forefront for government and the community and articulating their relevance to broader policy agendas.
- Work with regional, rural and remote communities, education providers, employers and across all tiers of government and stakeholders to improve education access, participation and outcomes.
- Provide advice to the Australian Government to ensure it is achieving maximum impact and value for money from investments and initiatives in regional, rural and remote education.
- Provide advice to the Australian Government on effective and efficient strategies to improve access, participation and attainment in regional, rural and remote education in Australia.
- Advocate for the improvement of education policies spanning early childhood education and care, schools, and tertiary education to better support regional, rural and remote students.

- Engage with all tiers of government and stakeholders to improve education outcomes of students from equity backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disability from regional, rural and remote areas.
- Oversee projects in response to the recommendations of the Napthine Review, using their findings to inform new policy suggestions to governments.
- Coordinate effort and oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Napthine and Halsey Reviews, providing a national focus for regional, rural and remote education, training and research.

### **Key deliverables**

- An annual report to the Minister for Education, detailed below.
- An annual workplan provided to and agreed by the Minister for Education.
- Oversee a formal evaluation of all measures taken in response to the Napthine Review
- Provide advice on regional, rural and remote education policy issues spanning early childhood education through to tertiary education, including barriers to access, participation and attainment.
- Engage with regional, rural and remote stakeholders including peak bodies representing parents, students and community bodies and education providers.
- Grow opportunities for vocational education and training (VET) in regional, rural and remote areas by working with Commonwealth, state and territory governments and Jobs and Skills Australia.
- Build partnerships to enhance the social and economic contribution of higher education, including research, to regional, rural and remote communities.
- Attend conferences, forums, roundtables and other opportunities for engagement with regional, rural and remote communities and stakeholders, as required.

### **Annual Report**

The Commissioner will report annually to the Minister for Education, and the Assistant Minister for Education, as required, on the state of education in the regions. The annual report will include:

- an update on progress of measures taken in response to the Napthine and Halsey Reviews
- examples of successful existing initiatives, highlighting cases of best practice
- an analysis of the current, emerging and future education needs of regional, rural and remote areas
- an examination of trends in regional, rural and remote student outcomes
- advice on improving tertiary student achievement, access and attainment using relevant indicators across all education sectors

- a summary of outcomes of projects undertaken in response to the Napthine Review, including any policy recommendations
- a summary of stakeholder engagement and consultations undertaken
- responses to other issues, as required.

### **Support and Secretariat**

The Commissioner is supported by an Executive Assistant as well as a policy secretariat based within the Department of Education.