



# 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) and the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy (Naphthine Review) highlighted the challenges of equitable access to education in regional and remote areas, with the Naphthine Review recommending the creation of a Regional Education Commissioner to bring together the efforts of Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to provide an ongoing national focus on regional, rural and remote education outcomes. Supporting more people from underrepresented backgrounds to participate in education, including regional Australians, was also a focus of the Australian Universities Accord.

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

The primary goal of the Commissioner is to work with the Australian Government to improve education outcomes for regional, rural and remote students so these students have the opportunity to access and participate in education at all levels to achieve their aspirations.

## 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.
- Support the implementation of Commonwealth strategies, priorities and measures for improving the quality and sustainability of, and access to, education in regional and remote areas.
- Engage with reviews, committees and government departments relevant to regional, rural and remote education matters to provide an ongoing national focus on education outcomes in regional Australia.
- Consult and build relationships with regional, rural and remote communities, education providers, industry, not-for-profit groups and across all tiers of government and stakeholders to improve education access, participation and outcomes for students in regional, rural and remote areas.
- Provide independent advice to the Minister for Education, and other relevant Ministers as required, 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 those regional, rural and remote students who experience multiple compounding challenges accessing, participating and completing their education, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disability.
- Undertake research projects and share findings to inform new policy suggestions to governments.



## Key deliverables

- An annual report to the Minister for Education.
- An annual workplan provided to and agreed by the Minister for Education setting out the key priorities, areas of focus, projects and engagement planned by the Regional Education Commissioner for the relevant year.
- Provide advice to the Minister for Education, and other relevant Ministers as required, 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.
- Make submissions to inquiries relevant to regional, rural and remote education issues.

## 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 relevant to regional, rural and remote education
- 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 student access and attainment using relevant indicators across all education sectors
- a summary of outcomes of projects undertaken, including any policy recommendations
- a summary of stakeholder engagement and consultations undertaken
- responses to other issues, as required.

## Support and Secretariat

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

