



NCSEHE

National Centre for Student
Equity in Higher Education



Curtin University

STUDENT EQUITY PERFORMANCE IN AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

2007 to 2012

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The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and is hosted at Curtin University. The objectives of the NCSEHE are:

- to be at the centre of public policy dialogue about equity in Higher Education; and
- to 'close the loop' between equity policy, research and practice by:
 - o supporting and informing evaluation of current equity practice with a particular focus on identifying good practice;
 - o identifying innovative approaches to equity through existing research and the development of a forward research program to fill gaps in knowledge; and
 - o translating these learnings into practical advice for decision makers and practitioners alike.

Whilst the NCSEHE's focus is equity in higher education, the work of the NCSEHE is not limited to the issue of low-SES participation; rather it focuses on equity issues as they relate to a range of marginalised and/or disadvantaged groups in Australia.

For further information on the NCSEHE, please visit ncsehe.edu.au

Introduction

This NCSEHE Briefing Note reports on recent trends in student enrolment in Australian higher education in key equity groups. Specifically, it reports on the number of domestic undergraduates between 2007 and 2012 in the 38 'Table A providers' in Australian higher education and enrolments in six equity groups:

- Low Socio-Economic Status ('low SES') students;
- Indigenous Students;
- Students with Disabilities;
- Regional Students;
- Remote Students; and
- Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) students (also referred to as students from 'culturally and linguistically diverse' backgrounds or 'CALD students').

In each equity group, results are reported for the national system in total, by institutional groupings, by state and territory, and by regional or metropolitan status, for each year. All reporting is for domestic undergraduates in each given year. The institutional groupings used are as follows:

- *The Group of Eight*: Australian National University (ANU), Melbourne, Monash, Sydney, New South Wales (UNSW), Queensland (UQ), Western Australia (UWA), and Adelaide;
- *The Australian Technology Network (ATN)*: Curtin University, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), RMIT University (RMIT), Queensland University of Technology (QUT), and University of South Australia (UniSA);
- *The Innovative Research Universities (IRU)*: Murdoch, Flinders, Griffith, James Cook (JCU), Newcastle, La Trobe, and Charles Darwin University (CDU).
- *Regional Universities Network*: Southern Cross, New England (UNE), Federation, Sunshine Coast (SCU), Central Queensland (CQU), and Southern Queensland (USQ).
- *The Unaligned Universities*: Other Table A providers) – Macquarie, Wollongong, Deakin, Charles Sturt (CSU), Tasmania, Australian Catholic University (ACU), Canberra, Edith Cowan University (ECU), Swinburne, Victoria, Western Sydney (UWS) and The Batchelor Institute (Batchelor).

In addition, an analysis is also reported for a regional grouping of universities from the above list:

- *Regionally Headquartered*: Institutions with a major regional – CSU, Southern Cross, UNE, Federation, CQU, JCU, USQ, Tasmania, CDU, and Batchelor.
- *Metropolitan Institutions with Regional Campuses*: Institutions with one or more regional campus – Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong, Deakin, La Trobe, Monash, RMIT, Melbourne, QUT, UQ, SCU, Curtin, ECU, Murdoch, UWA, Flinders, Adelaide, UniSA, and ACU.
- *No Regional Campuses*: Metropolitan Institutions with no regional campus: ANU, Sydney, UNSW, Griffith, Macquarie, Canberra, Swinburne, Victoria and UWS.

All student data reported or derived for the purposes of this document are sourced from *Students: Selected Higher Education Statistics 2012* (Appendix 2: Equity Data), originally sourced from the then Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE 2013a).

Student Equity Policy

In 2008, the Rudd Government announced a target to increase higher education attainment in Australia, with a goal of 40% of 25 to 34 year olds attaining a bachelor's degree or higher by 2025. This necessitated an expansion in higher education places across Australia in line with recommendations of the 2008 *Review of Australian Higher Education* (the 'Bradley Review').

The Commonwealth's first response to the Review came in the 2009 Federal Budget with the release of *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*, a four year \$5.4 billion policy package for higher education. As well as this funding, the Government reiterated the Commonwealth's support for equity in higher education with the introduction of a 2020 target for low SES participation, equal to 20% of the total domestic undergraduate student population in all higher education providers. In 2008, low SES students accounted for 16.3% of all domestic undergraduates in Table A providers and around 16.1% in all higher education providers.

Currently, the Commonwealth examines enrolment performance for major equity groups in comparison with equity group reference values – state- and territory-specific population shares for each of these groups based on ABS census information (e.g., the share of Victoria's population living in remote areas). The term low SES refers to students in the bottom 25% (bottom quartile) in a population ranking of SES which combines an area (ABS collection district) measure of neighbourhood SES in a national ranking of ABS census data and an institutional count of the number of students receiving Centrelink payments.

Table 1: Equity Group Reference Values, Percentage from Relevant Population, %^a

| State/Territory | Low SES ^b | Disability | Indigenous | Metropolitan | Regional | Remote | NESB ^c |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|--------------|----------|--------|-------------------|
| New South Wales | 18.4% | 8.0% | 2.23% | 76.09% | 23.32% | 0.60% | 4.66% |
| Victoria | 17.4% | 8.0% | 0.63% | 75.49% | 24.41% | 0.10% | 4.30% |
| Queensland | 19.4% | 8.0% | 3.16% | 67.01% | 29.37% | 3.61% | 2.35% |
| Western Australia | 16.7% | 8.0% | 2.78% | 71.46% | 21.57% | 6.98% | 3.21% |
| South Australia | 22.9% | 8.0% | 1.76% | 72.53% | 23.73% | 3.74% | 2.50% |
| Tasmania | 32.8% | 8.0% | 3.65% | 40.65% | 57.04% | 2.31% | 1.09% |
| Northern Territory | Other | 8.0% | 23.65% | 0.00% | 56.09% | 43.91% | 1.94% |
| Australian Capital Territory | Other | 8.0% | 1.33% | 99.89% | 0.11% | 0.00% | 3.62% |

Note: a. "Equity Reference Values" show the percentage of people from the various equity groups in the general population (aged 15-64) of each State and Territory using 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data.
 b. The equity group reference value for low SES students is an 'excellence target' with institutions also being allowed to cite 'improvement' targets in their compacts. The excellence measure is sourced from the *Performance Funding: Technical Guidelines* document released by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in 2011.
 c. In other discussions of student equity, NESB students are often referred to as students from 'culturally and linguistically diverse' (CALD) backgrounds or 'CALD students'.

Source: Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICSRTE). (2013a). *Students: Selected Higher Education Statistics 2012*, Appendix 5: Equity Performance Data. Canberra: DIICSRTE.

Total Enrolment

The 38 Table A providers dominate Australian higher education, with 93.4% of all domestic undergraduate enrolments (on a headcount basis) in 2012. Enrolment (number of students) increased from 528,844 in 2007 to 634,434 in 2012 – the latest year for which data are available. This represents an overall increase of 105,590 or 20% over the five year period, with a noticeable acceleration from 2009 following the deregulation of student places in higher education (the removal of student caps). However, growth in enrolments was not evenly distributed institutionally or geographically, with the Group of Eight (Go8) seeing enrolment growth equal to only half that of overall growth since 2007 (10.9%), while the Unaligned Group, comprising more institutions founded more recently, expanded enrolment by almost one-third (31.7%) by 2012. Regionally based universities grew less quickly than those based in metropolitan areas. The three largest states (New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland) recorded growth just under the national average. Western Australia (25.8%) and the Northern Territory (29.3%) saw much faster expansions off relatively smaller initial bases.

Table 2: Domestic Undergraduate Enrolments, Higher Education, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Growth (07-12) | Growth (07-12) % |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| National | 528,844 | 532,527 | 553,374 | 580,372 | 600,412 | 634,434 | 105,590 | 20.0% |
| Group of Eight | 147,609 | 148,484 | 152,718 | 157,289 | 159,749 | 163,643 | 16,034 | 10.9% |
| ATN Group | 94,486 | 95,520 | 97,467 | 99,423 | 102,097 | 109,302 | 14,816 | 15.7% |
| IRU Group | 88,632 | 89,480 | 93,518 | 98,191 | 100,849 | 106,050 | 17,418 | 19.7% |
| Regional Universities Network | 47,650 | 47,782 | 49,716 | 51,627 | 54,072 | 57,295 | 9,645 | 20.2% |
| Unaligned Group | 150,467 | 151,261 | 159,955 | 173,842 | 183,645 | 198,144 | 47,677 | 31.7% |
| Regionally Headquartered | 89,761 | 88,873 | 92,109 | 97,115 | 99,752 | 105,739 | 15,978 | 17.8% |
| Metro Institutions with Regional Campuses | 306,688 | 309,942 | 320,711 | 333,902 | 345,675 | 363,823 | 57,135 | 18.6% |
| No Regional Campuses | 132,395 | 133,712 | 140,554 | 149,355 | 154,985 | 164,872 | 32,477 | 24.5% |
| New South Wales | 168,521 | 170,055 | 177,540 | 185,704 | 191,504 | 198,720 | 30,199 | 17.9% |
| Victoria | 125,606 | 126,444 | 128,467 | 134,030 | 138,037 | 147,157 | 21,551 | 17.2% |
| Queensland | 105,434 | 104,966 | 109,415 | 114,602 | 118,218 | 124,619 | 19,185 | 18.2% |
| Western Australia | 51,857 | 52,367 | 55,201 | 58,311 | 60,740 | 65,231 | 13,374 | 25.8% |
| South Australia | 38,716 | 38,970 | 40,203 | 41,669 | 43,227 | 45,169 | 6,453 | 16.7% |
| Tasmania | 12,042 | 12,108 | 12,612 | 13,160 | 13,061 | 14,990 | 2,948 | 24.5% |
| Northern Territory | 4,339 | 4,469 | 4,865 | 5,243 | 5,213 | 5,609 | 1,270 | 29.3% |
| Australian Capital Territory | 13,810 | 14,094 | 14,734 | 15,776 | 16,403 | 17,141 | 3,331 | 24.1% |
| Multi-State ^a | 8,519 | 9,054 | 10,337 | 11,877 | 14,009 | 15,798 | 7,279 | 85.4% |

Note: a. The Australian Catholic University is the Multi-State institution.

Source: DIICCS RTE (2013a), see Table 1.

Student Equity Outcomes: 2007 to 2012

The broadening of higher education participation since 2007 has seen generally faster rates of growth in enrolments in Table A providers by equity group students, with enrolment growth among students with disabilities of 43.5%, over double that of in the entire system, with Indigenous student numbers also increasing. The exception was the relatively modest growth in regional student numbers, just in line with overall growth, and the tepid growth in remote student numbers, which saw an expansion of only 6.9% since 2007.

Table 3: Domestic Undergraduate Enrolments, Higher Education, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Growth (07-12) | Growth (07-12) % |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| National | 528,844 | 532,527 | 553,374 | 580,372 | 600,412 | 634,434 | 105,590 | 20.0% |
| Low SES | 85,873 | 86,581 | 90,447 | 96,706 | 102,163 | 109,788 | 23,915 | 27.8% |
| Students with Disabilities | 23,148 | 23,447 | 24,948 | 28,057 | 30,094 | 33,220 | 10,072 | 43.5% |
| Indigenous | 6,828 | 6,820 | 7,296 | 7,943 | 8,445 | 9,005 | 2,177 | 31.9% |
| Regional | 100,826 | 101,339 | 104,266 | 110,646 | 115,250 | 121,476 | 20,650 | 20.5% |
| Remote | 5,428 | 5,240 | 5,368 | 5,532 | 5,572 | 5,804 | 376 | 6.9% |
| NESB | 16,702 | 17,222 | 17,649 | 18,227 | 19,226 | 21,289 | 4,587 | 27.5% |

Source: DIICSRTE (2013a), see Table 1.

As a consequence of faster growth in equity group enrolments, the relative share of equity groups in total higher education enrolments has been increasing to 2012. Low SES students accounted for 17.3% of student enrolments in 2012, up from 16.2% of 2007 enrolments. Students with disabilities represented 5.2% of all domestic undergraduates in 2012, up from 4.4% in 2007, although still below the national reference target of their population share of 8%. Overall growth saw increases in Indigenous, regional and NESB student shares and a decline for remote students.

Table 4: Student Equity Enrolment Proportions, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| National | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Low SES | 16.2% | 16.3% | 16.3% | 16.7% | 17.0% | 17.3% |
| Students with Disabilities | 4.4% | 4.4% | 4.5% | 4.8% | 5.0% | 5.2% |
| Indigenous | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% |
| Regional | 19.1% | 19.0% | 18.8% | 19.1% | 19.2% | 19.1% |
| Remote | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% |
| NESB | 3.2% | 3.2% | 3.2% | 3.1% | 3.2% | 3.4% |

Source: Derived from Table 3.

Low SES Student Equity Outcomes: 2007 to 2012

All Table A education providers have agreed to compacts with the Commonwealth to increase low SES student participation towards a proposed target share of 20% of all domestic undergraduate enrolments, compared to their population share of 25%. Since 2009, the national share of low SES students in Table A higher education enrolments has increased from 16.3% to 17.3%, with growth being seen in all major university groupings.

Historically, low SES students have seen higher participation in newer universities, for instance, the IRU Group’s 2007 share of 19.5% was approaching the 20% participation share target, with the IRU universities exceeding it in 2012. The traditional university groupings, the Group of Eight (10.6% in 2012) and the ATN Group (16.0%) have lower levels of low SES participation as do metropolitan-based institutions in general (15.6%).

Table 5a: Low SES Student Equity Ratio, By Institutional Groupings, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| National – Low SES | 16.2% | 16.3% | 16.3% | 16.7% | 17.0% | 17.3% |
| Group of Eight | 10.1% | 9.9% | 9.8% | 10.0% | 10.6% | 10.6% |
| ATN Group | 14.5% | 14.7% | 14.8% | 15.3% | 15.4% | 16.0% |
| IRU Group | 19.4% | 19.4% | 19.4% | 19.7% | 20.1% | 20.5% |
| Regional Universities Network | 28.7% | 29.0% | 29.3% | 29.6% | 29.8% | 30.0% |
| Unaligned Group | 17.5% | 17.6% | 17.7% | 17.9% | 18.1% | 18.2% |
| Regionally Headquartered | 27.3% | 27.3% | 27.6% | 27.9% | 28.1% | 28.4% |
| Metro Institutions with Regional Campuses | 14.4% | 14.6% | 14.6% | 14.8% | 15.2% | 15.6% |
| No Regional Campuses | 12.9% | 12.9% | 12.9% | 13.5% | 13.9% | 14.0% |

Source: DIICSRTE (2013a), see Table 1.

The regional groupings enrol relatively large numbers of low SES students. The 2007 low SES student share of enrolment of 28.7% in the Regional Universities Network already exceeded the proposed long-term national target for low SES participation of 20%, rising to 30% in 2012. ‘Regionally Headquartered’ institutions saw a 28.4% low SES participation share in that year.

Low SES Student Equity Outcomes: 2007 to 2012 (cont'd)

The marked variation in state and territory aggregate outcomes (Table 5b) reflects the nature of the low SES measure which in large part (two-thirds weighting) is determined by the SES of the collection districts (CDs) of student home addresses and relies on a national ranking of CDs using ABS household census data to determine an area's SES. (From 2013 this will be based on the ABS's SA1 area measure rather than CD).

Under the 2012 ranking, states such as Victoria and Western Australia have smaller low SES populations from which students can be drawn simply because they have fewer low SES CDs in the national ranking. As a result in the excellence targets for these states are lower than those for South Australia or Tasmania.

Table 5b: Low SES Student Equity Ratio, By State and Territory, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Excellence Target ^a |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------------|
| New South Wales | 16.7% | 16.8% | 16.9% | 17.4% | 17.8% | 17.8% | 18.4% |
| Victoria | 13.7% | 13.8% | 14.0% | 14.1% | 14.6% | 15.2% | 17.4% |
| Queensland | 19.7% | 19.4% | 19.3% | 19.6% | 19.7% | 19.9% | 19.4% |
| Western Australia | 11.1% | 11.2% | 11.1% | 11.2% | 11.4% | 12.2% | 16.7% |
| South Australia | 20.3% | 20.6% | 20.8% | 21.4% | 22.1% | 22.6% | 22.9% |
| Tasmania | 32.4% | 31.3% | 31.5% | 32.4% | 32.8% | 32.0% | 32.8% |
| Northern Territory | 14.6% | 15.5% | 17.9% | 19.8% | 19.6% | 19.3% | other |
| Australian Capital Territory | 4.4% | 4.7% | 4.9% | 5.6% | 5.7% | 5.9% | other |
| Multi-State | 12.4% | 13.0% | 12.4% | 12.7% | 13.0% | 13.3% | other |

Note: Please see Table 1, Note (b) for a definition of 'excellence target'.

Source: DIICCS RTE (2013a), see Table 1.

Finally, it should be noted that the national target for low SES participation is for all higher education providers, with this being equal to 17.1% of all domestic undergraduate enrolments in 2012, up from 16.1% in 2007.

Table 5c: Low SES Student Equity Ratio, By Institutional Groupings, All Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| National – Low SES | 16.1% | 16.1% | 16.2% | 16.5% | 16.8% | 17.1% |

Source: DIICCS RTE (2013a), see Table 1.

Students with Disabilities Equity Outcomes: 2007 to 2012

The enrolment share of students with disabilities in domestic undergraduate programs has exceeded 5% for the last two years, reaching 5.2% in 2012. The growth in share of this equity group represents its rapid expansion (43.5%) since 2007 in numbers, with enrolments rising from 23,148 in 2007 to 33,220 in 2012 (as show in Table 3). Rates of enrolment of students with disabilities vary between university groupings and geographical locations of institutions. The IRU universities and those institutions in the Regional Universities Network had higher than average participation shares among students with disabilities in comparison with the national average.

The geographical dispersal of enrolment patterns is also noteworthy. Regional institutions reported higher shares than institutions based in metropolitan areas. Enrolment patterns on a state and territory basis show an even wider divergence, with Tasmania (8.7%) and South Australia (7.9%) either exceeding or approaching the national target of 8%, while Queensland has an enrolment rate of 4.1%.

Table 6: Students with Disabilities Equity Ratio, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| National –Disabilities | 4.4% | 4.4% | 4.5% | 4.8% | 5.0% | 5.2% |
| Group of Eight | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.8% | 4.3% | 4.4% | 4.5% |
| ATN Group | 4.5% | 4.5% | 4.6% | 4.7% | 4.7% | 4.7% |
| IRU Group | 5.3% | 5.3% | 4.9% | 5.4% | 5.6% | 5.9% |
| Regional Universities Network | 5.0% | 5.2% | 5.4% | 5.5% | 5.7% | 6.0% |
| Unaligned Group | 4.3% | 4.3% | 4.7% | 4.9% | 5.2% | 5.5% |
| Regionally Headquartered | 5.1% | 5.2% | 5.4% | 5.5% | 5.7% | 5.9% |
| Metro Institutions with Regional Campuses | 4.4% | 4.5% | 4.6% | 5.1% | 5.3% | 5.5% |
| No Regional Campuses | 3.9% | 3.7% | 3.7% | 3.8% | 4.0% | 4.3% |
| New South Wales | 4.3% | 4.2% | 4.2% | 4.6% | 4.7% | 4.8% |
| Victoria | 3.8% | 3.9% | 4.0% | 4.3% | 4.7% | 5.1% |
| Queensland | 4.2% | 4.1% | 4.0% | 3.9% | 3.9% | 4.1% |
| Western Australia | 3.4% | 3.5% | 4.4% | 4.9% | 5.3% | 5.7% |
| South Australia | 7.0% | 7.0% | 7.0% | 7.6% | 7.8% | 7.9% |
| Tasmania | 6.9% | 6.7% | 7.4% | 8.4% | 9.1% | 8.7% |
| Northern Territory | 5.1% | 5.6% | 5.4% | 5.8% | 6.0% | 5.6% |
| Australian Capital Territory | 6.0% | 6.1% | 6.3% | 6.4% | 6.5% | 6.3% |
| Multi-State | 4.0% | 5.6% | 6.3% | 6.0% | 5.8% | 6.7% |

Source: DIICSRTE (2013a), see Table 1.

Indigenous Student Equity Outcomes: 2007 to 2012

Indigenous students accounted for 1.4% of all domestic enrolments in undergraduate programs in 2012, with this share being relatively stable over the past five years. There continues to be a divergence in institutional shares of Indigenous enrolment, with the Group of Eight having a 0.7% share in 2012 and the Regional Universities Network recording an overall share of 2.3%, up from 1.7% in 2007.

Regionally based institutions have a higher share of enrolment, in part reflecting larger Indigenous populations in their local or regional zones for student recruitment. This is reflected in enrolment statistics on a state and territory basis, with Queensland (1.9% student share and 3.16% population share) and the Northern Territory (7.4% student share and 23.65% population share) having higher rates of enrolment in part due to larger local populations. Among the states, Victoria's enrolment share of 0.7% exceeds its population share (0.63%).

Table 7: Indigenous Equity Ratio, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Reference Share ^a |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| National – Indigenous | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% | |
| Group of Eight | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% | |
| ATN Group | 1.4% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.2% | |
| IRU Group | 1.6% | 1.8% | 1.8% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.2% | |
| Regional Universities Network | 1.7% | 1.7% | 2.1% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 2.3% | |
| Unaligned Group | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.4% | |
| Regionally Headquartered | 2.4% | 2.4% | 2.6% | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.8% | |
| Metro Institutions with Regional Campuses | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.2% | 1.2% | |
| No Regional Campuses | 0.9% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.1% | 1.1% | |
| New South Wales | 1.2% | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.4% | 1.5% | 1.6% | 2.23% |
| Victoria | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.63% |
| Queensland | 1.5% | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.8% | 1.9% | 3.16% |
| Western Australia | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.3% | 1.2% | 1.2% | 1.2% | 2.78% |
| South Australia | 1.2% | 1.2% | 1.1% | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.76% |
| Tasmania | 1.9% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 3.65% |
| Northern Territory | 13.7% | 12.4% | 11.4% | 11.3% | 9.5% | 7.4% | 23.65% |
| Australian Capital Territory | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.33% |
| Multi-State | 3.7% | 3.4% | 2.7% | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.1% | - |

Note: The 'Reference Share' refers to the population share in Table 1.

Source: DIICCS RTE (2013a), see Table 1.

Regional Students Equity Outcomes: 2007 to 2012

Other than a dip in share in 2009, the enrolment share of regional students in Australian higher education has remained broadly constant over the past six years at around 19.1% of all students. A comparison of enrolment patterns in the states and territories with regional population shares shows that regional shares of university institution student populations are generally lower than those of their general population share (e.g. 17.3% student share in New South Wales against a population share of 23.2%).

Among university groupings, the ATN Group (11.2% in 2012) and the IRU Group (20.3%) have seen increases in regional student share of their enrolments while the Group of Eight (11.2% in 2012, down from 11.5% in 2007) and the Regional Universities Network (down to 53.7% in 2012) have seen a decline. Overall, institutions with headquarters or major campuses in the regions have seen a decline in the regional share of their enrolments from very high base (51% plus), reflecting their traditional areas of student recruitment. As regional student enrolments have remained flat as a share of total enrolments in the entire system, this reduction in regional student shares in these institutions has been matched by a slight increase in metropolitan-based institutions, with or without regional campuses.

Table 8: Regional Student Equity Ratio, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Reference Share ^a |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| National – Regional | 19.1% | 19.0% | 18.8% | 19.1% | 19.2% | 19.1% | |
| Group of Eight | 11.5% | 11.4% | 10.9% | 11.3% | 11.5% | 11.2% | |
| ATN Group | 10.3% | 10.5% | 10.7% | 11.2% | 10.8% | 11.1% | |
| IRU Group | 19.9% | 19.7% | 19.3% | 19.5% | 20.0% | 20.3% | |
| Regional Universities Network | 57.1% | 56.3% | 55.5% | 54.9% | 54.5% | 53.7% | |
| Unaligned Group | 19.5% | 19.8% | 19.7% | 19.8% | 19.7% | 19.5% | |
| Regionally Headquartered | 51.1% | 50.7% | 50.3% | 49.5% | 49.2% | 48.6% | |
| Metro Institutions with Regional Campuses | 14.7% | 14.9% | 14.9% | 15.3% | 15.6% | 15.6% | |
| No Regional Campuses | 7.5% | 7.6% | 7.2% | 7.7% | 8.0% | 8.0% | |
| New South Wales | 18.4% | 18.1% | 17.8% | 17.6% | 17.6% | 17.3% | 23.32% |
| Victoria | 18.7% | 19.1% | 19.0% | 19.2% | 19.6% | 19.5% | 24.41% |
| Queensland | 22.7% | 22.4% | 22.0% | 22.3% | 22.5% | 22.5% | 29.37% |
| Western Australia | 13.1% | 13.3% | 13.2% | 13.6% | 13.9% | 14.6% | 21.57% |
| South Australia | 13.2% | 13.3% | 13.5% | 14.6% | 15.2% | 15.2% | 23.73% |
| Tasmania | 41.0% | 41.6% | 42.0% | 43.0% | 42.7% | 41.7% | 57.04% |
| Northern Territory | 60.1% | 57.8% | 55.1% | 53.6% | 53.6% | 53.0% | 56.09% |
| Australian Capital Territory | 14.0% | 14.7% | 15.2% | 16.6% | 16.7% | 16.7% | 0.11% |
| Multi-State | 11.3% | 11.9% | 11.9% | 12.0% | 12.1% | 12.2% | - |

Note: The 'Reference Share' refers to the population share in Table 1. All of the Northern Territory is either 'regional' or 'remote'.

Source: DIICCS RTE (2013a), see Table 1.

Remote Students Equity Outcomes: 2007 to 2012

The remote share of university enrolments has declined nationally since 2007, with 0.9% of all domestic undergraduates in 2012 living in remote areas compared with 1.0% in 2007. Remote enrolments tend to be concentrated in regional and newer universities, with metropolitan universities without a regional campus having a remote student share of only 0.2% in 2012, compared with 2.6% for regionally headquartered universities. This is also reflected in the major institutional groupings, with the Group of Eight universities having a remote share of student enrolment of 0.5% in 2012 compared with 1.9% for the institutions in the Regional Universities Network.

Among the states and territories, only Victoria had a remote enrolment share exceeding that of its populations share, 0.2% compared to 0.1%, while the Northern Territory’s institutions (Charles Darwin and Batchelor) had a 10.9% remote student share compared with a general population share of 43.91%.

Table 9: Remote Student Equity Ratio, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Reference Share ^a |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| National – Remote | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% | |
| Group of Eight | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.5% | |
| ATN Group | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% | |
| IRU Group | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.6% | |
| Regional Universities Network | 2.2% | 2.3% | 2.2% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 1.9% | |
| Unaligned Group | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | |
| Regionally Headquartered | 3.0% | 2.9% | 2.8% | 2.7% | 2.7% | 2.6% | |
| Metro Institutions with Regional Campuses | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.8% | |
| No Regional Campuses | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | |
| New South Wales | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| Victoria | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| Queensland | 1.7% | 1.7% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 3.61% |
| Western Australia | 2.0% | 2.0% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 6.98% |
| South Australia | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 3.74% |
| Tasmania | 1.1% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 2.31% |
| Northern Territory | 14.3% | 13.6% | 13.0% | 12.4% | 12.0% | 10.9% | 43.91% |
| Australian Capital Territory | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.0% |
| Multi-State | 0.5% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.3% | - |

Note: The ‘Reference Share’ refers to the population share in Table 1. All of the Northern Territory is either ‘regional’ or ‘remote’.

Source: DIICSRTE (2013a), see Table 1.

Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) Student Equity Outcomes: 2007 to 2012

The enrolment share of students from a non-English speaking background (NESB) has increased over the past six years, from 3.2% of total national share of undergraduate places in 2007 to 3.4% in 2012. The NESB student equity group is unique in that its share of student places is higher in the Group of Eight and ATN institutional groupings than elsewhere, with NESB student enrolments being uniformly higher in metropolitan areas than the regions.

NESB students enjoy higher shares of university enrolments than their population shares in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the two territories, with enrolment shares lagging the population reference indicator in New South Wales and Victoria.

Table 10: Non-English Speaking Background (NESB)^a Student Equity Ratio, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Reference Share ^b |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| National – NESB | 3.2% | 3.2% | 3.2% | 3.1% | 3.2% | 3.4% | |
| Group of Eight | 4.1% | 4.0% | 3.8% | 3.7% | 3.7% | 4.0% | |
| ATN Group | 3.4% | 3.4% | 3.4% | 3.5% | 3.7% | 4.0% | |
| IRU Group | 2.2% | 2.4% | 2.3% | 2.4% | 2.5% | 2.8% | |
| Regional Universities Network | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.9% | 1.3% | 1.4% | |
| Unaligned Group | 3.4% | 3.7% | 3.7% | 3.5% | 3.4% | 3.4% | |
| Regionally Headquartered | 1.1% | 1.2% | 1.2% | 1.3% | 1.5% | 1.7% | |
| Metro Institutions with Regional Campuses | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.9% | 3.2% | |
| No Regional Campuses | 5.5% | 5.6% | 5.3% | 5.0% | 4.8% | 4.8% | |
| New South Wales | 4.4% | 4.4% | 4.1% | 3.8% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 4.66% |
| Victoria | 3.1% | 3.3% | 3.4% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.7% | 4.30% |
| Queensland | 1.9% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.3% | 2.6% | 2.35% |
| Western Australia | 3.0% | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.9% | 3.0% | 3.3% | 3.21% |
| South Australia | 2.4% | 2.6% | 2.9% | 3.2% | 3.5% | 4.1% | 2.50% |
| Tasmania | 1.3% | 1.4% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.7% | 1.09% |
| Northern Territory | 2.2% | 2.4% | 2.5% | 3.1% | 3.1% | 3.5% | 1.94% |
| Australian Capital Territory | 2.9% | 3.1% | 3.3% | 3.5% | 3.5% | 4.0% | 3.62% |
| Multi-State | 3.0% | 3.2% | 3.0% | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.5% | - |

Note: a. As per Note c. in Table 1, NESB students are also often referred to as 'CALD students' – students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.
 b. The 'Reference Share' refers to the population share in Table 1.

Source: DIICSRTE (2013a), see Table 1.

Summary

The Australian higher education has seen a major expansion in student numbers since 2007, with the 38 Table A providers seeing a 20% increase in domestic undergraduates between 2007 and 2012, equal to 105,590 more students in 2012. This increase has been accompanied by a larger than 20% increase across all student equity groups except that of regional and remote students.

The number of low SES student increased by 27.8% between 2007 and 2012, and their share of total enrolment (domestic undergraduate) in Table A providers is now in excess of 17.3%, an increase of 1.1 percentage points since 2007. This is above the overall participation rate for the higher education sector of 17.1% (see Table 5c).

Similarly, the growth in the students with disabilities and Indigenous equity groups has seen their shares increase to 5.2% and 1.4% of student totals respectively, with the NESB equity group also seeing an increase in actual student numbers and relative shares. Regional student enrolment shares remained steady over the period between 2007 and 2012 with student numbers growing in line with overall student numbers. However, remote student numbers grew more slowly than overall numbers resulting in a relative decline in their share of enrolments to 2012.

Table 11: Student Equity Enrolments and Ratios, Table A Providers, 2007-2012

| Enrolments | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Growth (07-12) | Growth (07-12) % |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|--------------------------------|
| National | 528,844 | 532,527 | 553,374 | 580,372 | 600,412 | 634,434 | 105,590 | 20.0% |
| Low SES | 85,873 | 86,581 | 90,447 | 96,706 | 102,163 | 109,788 | 23,915 | 27.8% |
| Students with Disabilities | 23,148 | 23,447 | 24,948 | 28,057 | 30,094 | 33,220 | 10,072 | 43.5% |
| Indigenous | 6,828 | 6,820 | 7,296 | 7,943 | 8,445 | 9,005 | 2,177 | 31.9% |
| Regional | 100,826 | 101,339 | 104,266 | 110,646 | 115,250 | 121,476 | 20,650 | 20.5% |
| Remote | 5,428 | 5,240 | 5,368 | 5,532 | 5,572 | 5,804 | 376 | 6.9% |
| NESB | 16,702 | 17,222 | 17,649 | 18,227 | 19,226 | 21,289 | 4,587 | 27.5% |
| Equity Shares (%) | | | | | | | Percentage Point Change (07-12) | Growth in Share (07-12) |
| Low SES | 16.2% | 16.3% | 16.3% | 16.7% | 17.0% | 17.3% | 1.1% | 6.8% |
| Students with Disabilities | 4.4% | 4.4% | 4.5% | 4.8% | 5.0% | 5.2% | 0.6% | 13.6% |
| Indigenous | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 0.1% | 7.7% |
| Regional | 19.1% | 19.0% | 18.8% | 19.1% | 19.2% | 19.1% | 0% | 0.0% |
| Remote | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.9% | -0.1% | -10.0% |
| NESB | 3.2% | 3.2% | 3.2% | 3.1% | 3.2% | 3.4% | 0.2% | 6.3% |

Source: Tables 3 and 4.

Data source: DIICSRTE (2013a), see Table 1.

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