



NCSEHE
National Centre for Student
Equity in Higher Education



Curtin University

Considering Regional Students in the Proposed Higher Education Reforms

Professor Sue Trinidad, NCSEHE Director

2/02/2015

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What I will cover

- Australia widening participation – to, through and beyond HE (regional statistics)
- Regional Futures and the Importance of Scholarships



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I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians, the elders past and present of the land on which we meet.

Background




PROGRAM
3 DECADES ON:
 REFLECTIONS UPON RURAL EDUCATION
 - ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES
 AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS



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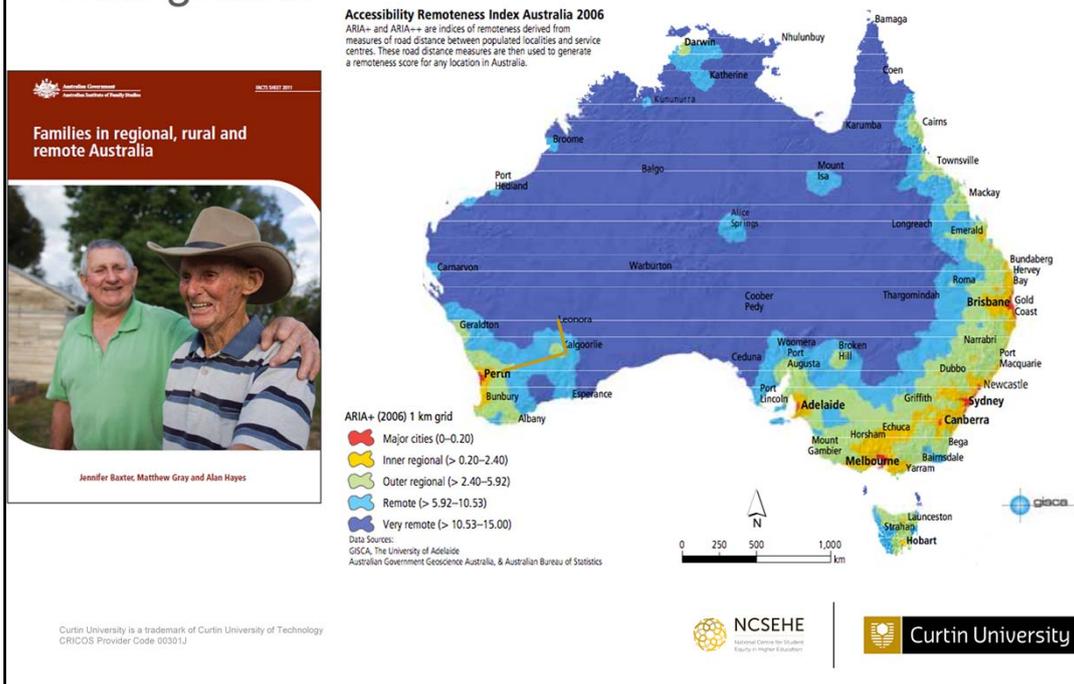



Thank you for this opportunity to talk about my passion. I flew to Armidale, NSW late last year to present a keynote at the Society for the Provision of Education Rural Australia (SPERA). Charles Sturt University has been a supporter of SPERA over the last 30 years. SPERA is concerned with the effect the ‘disadvantaged’ label has on rural communities and was formed in order to advance the positive aspects of regional education and life. By the time SPERA was incorporated in 1984, the *Country Area Program* and the *Disadvantaged School Program* had been operating some ten years and rural communities were becoming conditioned to accepting the label ‘disadvantaged’ in order to attract funds.

Access to Higher Education starts very early in a child’s educational journey. Addressing educational disadvantage has been at the heart of much of the research undertaken by me and many of my colleagues, including Professor John Pegg from UNE and his staff at the SiMERR National Research Centre. Over the years a number of significant pieces of research have referred to the educational inequalities in Australia between regional areas and the cities.

I am so pleased we have this wonderful opportunity today to network and reflect on the positives of regional education and health care provision and how they go hand in hand.

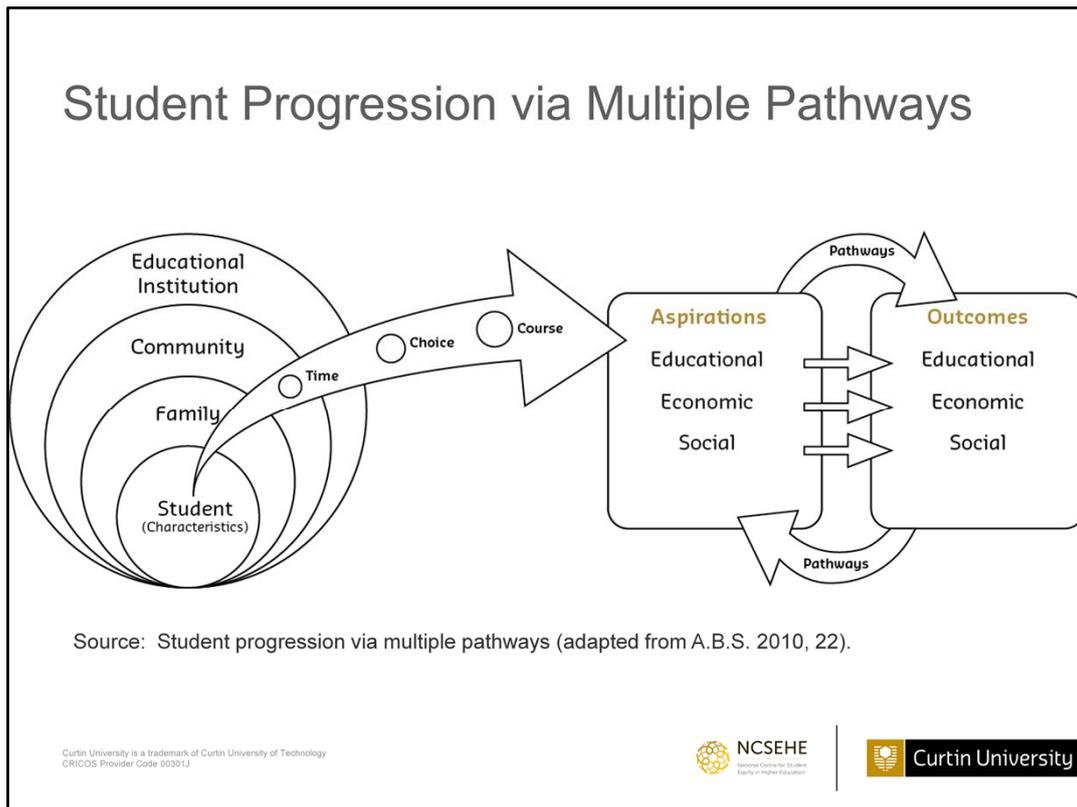
Background



To give you a little about my background I was born and educated in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. Both my parents had limited education with Mum not finishing the equivalent of Year 10 today and Dad not finishing Year 7. I did not realise then that in today's terms I would be classified as an 'equity student' as I came from a family classified as LSES, we lived in a town that is considered remote and I was the first in my family to attend university.

In Western Australia we do not have regional universities as you have here in the east so you move to city to study but of course now you can study online. I left Kalgoorlie to study in Perth and after completing my university degree I returned to the regions (Leonora) and taught Aboriginal students during 1980's. In the early 1990's I completed my Doctorate and by that time I was really was starting to understand the differences between having a city education compared to a regional education and how important it is to provide all students no matter where they live equal opportunities.

Reference: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/factsheets/2011/fs201103.pdf>



We know from research that student progression is via a multiple pathways and concerns many factors. It is understood that many causes of disadvantage in accessing higher education occur much earlier in life.

Australian universities have long demonstrated a strong commitment to student equity and to increasing the participation of people from disadvantaged backgrounds including regional and remote students. This commitment was a key recommendation from the Bradley Review (2008).

Over the years Equity initiatives in Australia have had bi-partisan support. The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) was set up to fund a range of university participation and partnership initiatives. Through HEPPP funding, Australian universities have been able to provide opportunities to students from under-represented backgrounds who have the ability to study at university, to actually do so. Australian universities' commitment to improving the access, participation and success in higher education of students from equity groups is evident in the current practice used by universities to reach prospective university students (**outreach**), help get them into university (**access**), and provide the **support** once the students commence, improving the retention and completion rates of those students. Such initiatives have been targeted at low SES and regional and remote students, in order to inform and expose school students and other prospective university students to the opportunities that higher education can offer.

The Kemp/Norton review discussed alternative entry pathways. A variety of entry pathways enables those equity students who desire to participate to have the capacity to apply for and successfully enter undergraduate study at university. A range of support services, such as mentoring and tutoring programs, ensure all students have the best chance of succeeding in their studies.

Access and Participation in Higher Education: Outreach | Access | Support

Overview
The DARE (Dream Aspire Reach Experience) Program aims to address the barriers related to participation in education for Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people. The curriculum-based program focuses on building the aspirations of students through face-to-face mentoring and engagement with parents, teachers and Indigenous communities. DARE engages with a variety of stakeholders to develop partnerships aimed at supporting school attendance and completion rates and raising students' awareness of further education opportunities beyond the school gates. The importance of a holistic approach underpinned by Indigenous protocols and knowledge is integral in approaching school engagement, student support and success.

Features of the program include:

- Year 10 secondary school students targeted to coincide with Senior Education and Training Planning
- 16 week program conducted in group settings within schools
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous undergraduate university students, Indigenous elders, Indigenous community leaders, business owners, health service employees, Community Education Counsellors, Queensland Police Officers and Indigenous Liaison Officers engaged as mentors
- Cross-cultural awareness training and ongoing support for mentors
- Cultural understanding, historical awareness and self-identity development incorporated to benefit both mentees and mentors

DARE focuses on building the aspirations of Indigenous students through face-to-face mentoring and engagement with parents, teachers and Indigenous communities

**DARE (Dream Aspire Reach Experience)
Indigenous Secondary School Student Mentoring Program**

- DARE Traditional Indigenous Games School Competition
- DARE Leadership Camp involving youth speakers, leadership and oration workshops, youth building, and cultural experiences
- DARE Awards Ceremony to celebrate participation, academic and attendance achievements

Outreach
The program aims to:

- raise the aspirations of Indigenous students to higher education
- improve secondary school attendance and completion rates of Indigenous students
- improve English literacy and numeracy skills of Indigenous students
- promote healthy and positive lifestyles for Indigenous students to improve their participation in education
- promote and foster cultural respect and understanding
- bridge the gap between schools, communities and universities

Access
A holistic approach underpinned by Indigenous protocols and knowledge is integral in governing school engagement, building rapport and trust.

Support
The program is partially HEPPP-funded, supporting leadership camps, traditional game days, and awards evening. In-kind support from the University of Southern Queensland allows the program to run in 15 secondary schools, with sponsorship from diverse funding allowing the provision of scholarships and extension of the program to a further two schools.

Outcomes
Success of the program is judged based on school participation, secondary student enrolment patterns and attendance rates, academic improvement records from schools, surveys, focus groups and reflective journals. Early indicators are positive:

- 10 secondary schools engaged in 2012, increasing to 15 in 2013
- 25 undergraduate students volunteered as mentors in 2012, increasing to 56 undergraduates and community members acting as mentors in 2013
- 405 secondary school students engaged in 2013
- Improved attendance rates, engagement and completion rates
- Increased Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program enrolments at the University of Southern Queensland from DARE engagement activities

Key Stats
The program is now in its second year of operation, and its impact on the tertiary enrolment and success rates of Indigenous students is beginning to be seen. Given the program's success and support from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, plans are underway to continue its expansion across the university's three campuses from 2014.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

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At the moment with the support of HEPP funding universities engage in significant outreach, access and support activities.

Our case study publication [Access-and-Participation-in-Higher-Education-2013](#) was distributed to all universities, government and industry stakeholders, and brought together a sample of the current practice of the 37 public universities across Australia. The universities' self-selected case studies spanned activities used to reach prospective university students (outreach), helping students progress into university (access) and providing support once students commence, improving the retention and completion rates of those students.

We are proudly showcasing these cases studies on the NCSEHE website (ncsehe.edu.au).

If you would like a hard copy of our publication, please feel free to [contact us](#). Alternatively, you can download a soft copy version here: [NCSEHE-Access-and-Participation-in-Higher-Education-2013](#) (28Mb)

Partnerships in Higher Education



Description
The iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program is a multi-sector partnership providing a regional pathway for Aboriginal students to a career in oral health in remote areas in the health industry. The program is a partnership between Curtin University, TAFE Western Australia, Charles Sturt University, Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy and then to the Bachelor of Dentistry.

Partners

- Curtin University/CSIU
- TAFE Western Australia
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Western NSW Local Health District
- The Rural Aboriginal Health Services Inc.

Objectives
Rural and remote Indigenous people suffer from higher rates of oral disease as a result of limited access to dental and oral health practitioners.

The iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program was developed specifically for Indigenous people in rural and remote areas of western NSW to help address the acute shortage of oral health and dental practitioners in the area. The program enables Indigenous students to study within their local area and provides a pathway with strong employment opportunities in oral health. It is designed to be following the training to rural and remote students, they will be more likely to remain in the area upon completion of their studies and therefore increase the number of dental assistants, and health therapists and dental practitioners in these disadvantaged areas.

Activities
The iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program was introduced in 2013 for Aboriginal students from the Central West, North West and Far West regions of NSW. The program commences with a 12 week full time flexible delivery Certificate in Oral Health Training. This introductory course provides students the opportunity to develop a range of skills in the classroom in addition to gaining work experience in the health/dental industry.

Upon completion of the Certificate II, students enrol in the Certificate III in Dental Assisting at TAFE Western Australia's Menanglebrook Aboriginal Learning Centre in Orange and access CSIU's state of the art dental clinic to develop practical skills in addition to their theoretical knowledge. Students can leave at the end of the Certificate III qualified as a dental assistant, or continue on through the Certificate IV and pathway to university.

Encouraging students to transition from TAFE to university to undertake further their career can be challenging. All iSmile students undertake regular contact with the university, dental clinics and therefore become familiar and comfortable with the university. It is envisaged that this familiarity will allow students to see they have a pathway to the Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy at Bachelor of Dentistry. At all stages iSmile students use shared facilities with TAFE, Western and CSIU oral health and dental students at all levels of study.

Outcomes
The initial cohort consisted of 13 students from locations such as Broken Hill, Lightning Ridge, Dubbo, Bourke, Condamine and Stanes. Of the initial intake, nine students are nearing completion of their Certificate III and seven have indicated they are going to continue into the Certificate III. The next cohort will commence the program and seven have indicated they are going to continue into the Certificate III. As the program is still in the early stages it is difficult to provide evidence of success, however anecdotal comments have been very encouraging. The students are highly enthusiastic and engaged in their learning, they are building professional networks that they will be able to draw on throughout their careers, and they are looking to the future. A number of the students have indicated they intend on continuing into the Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy or Bachelor of Dentistry upon completion of the program.

Partnerships
For partnerships to work and thrive there needs to be a strong common purpose. CSIU and TAFE Western are dedicated to improving the educational outcomes and lives for Indigenous, regional, rural and remote Australians. TAFE Western is the single largest provider of vocational education and training for Aboriginal people in Australia. The idea of working together with the state and federal governments and industry to provide pathways for Indigenous people came naturally.

Building on long established relationships, in 2008 CSIU partnered with TAFE NSW, the NSW Police Force and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to develop the Indigenous Police Recruitment Our Way Delivery (IPRED) training program. IPRED, managed by TAFE Western, is a specialist training program to assist Aboriginal people to gain entry into the NSW Police Academy at Dubbo, the first step to becoming an officer in the NSW Police Force. IPRED is offered at a range of locations including Broken Hill, Coonambidge, Campbelltown, Dubbo, Hillston, Mount Druitt, Neave, Redfern and Tamworth.

Future activities
As the next phase of development commences of the program, we will undertake a review and evaluation of the program. This will include reviewing the students' knowledge and skills to ensure the program is delivering students with the necessary skills to succeed either in practice or further study. A mentoring program is currently being developed for students who have shown an interest in continuing their studies, and a research project to evaluate the effectiveness of the program through tracking employment outcomes for graduates is in the early stages of planning.

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iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program
The program was developed specifically for Indigenous people in rural and remote areas of western New South Wales

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TAFE WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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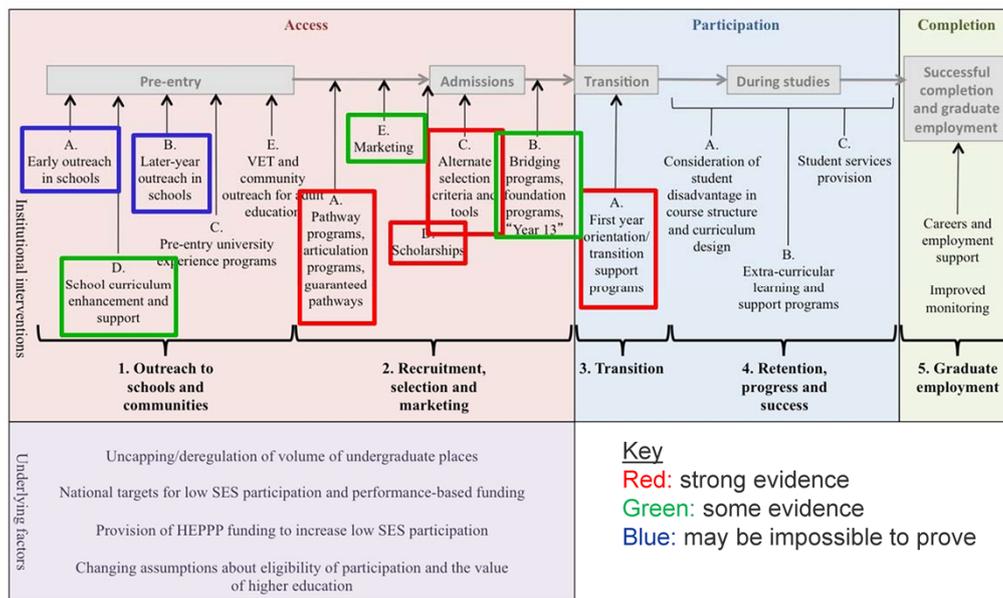
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We have just released our latest publication, [Partnerships in Higher Education](#) which looks at the important partnerships that universities have with community and other institutions to assist and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These partnerships have been the result of HEPPP funding and enable universities to enhance equity students' awareness, educational aspirations, access to and success in higher education across Australia. This is particularly important for regional students who often do not have the same opportunities as city students.

Hard copies of this latest publication are [available on request](#). Alternatively, you can download a soft copy version here: [Partnerships in Higher Education](#) (8.12Mb)

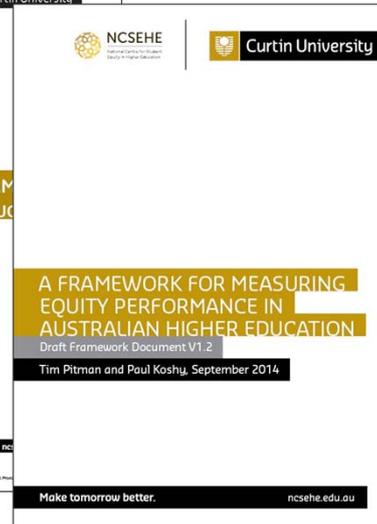
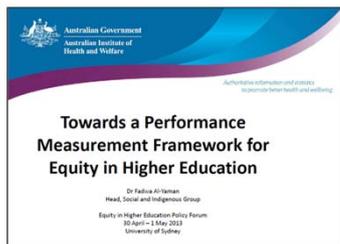
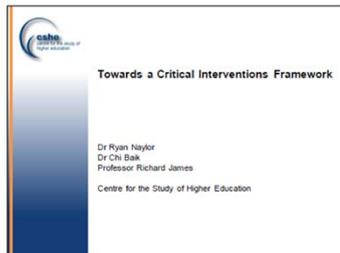
Critical Interventions Framework findings (2012)



The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education has been a part of some key research looking at the importance of support programs by universities across Australia to raise the aspirations and increase the participation of LSES students in HE. This includes work undertaken by Dr Ryan Naylor and colleagues at the University of Melbourne.

Reference: <http://www.ncsehe.edu.au/developing-critical-interventions-framework-presentation/>

Equity Performance Framework



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The Australian Government Department of Education has engaged the NCSEHE to develop an Equity Performance Framework for Australian Higher Education' ("the Framework"). The primary purpose of the Framework is to provide a mechanism, to identify relevant data and statistics for analysis, by which student equity in the higher education system can be monitored in Australia.

Reference: Equity Performance Framework <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/feedback-on-the-draft-equity-performance-framework-for-australian-higher-education/>

Equity Performance Framework

TIER 3: OUTCOMES (Post-higher education)		
Domain 7 Graduate outcomes		
	7.01 Graduate earnings	7.02 Graduate satisfaction
TIER 2: PERFORMANCE (Higher education)		
Domain 4 Aspirations for higher education	Domain 5 Access to higher education	Domain 6 Achievement in higher education
4.01 Intentions to undertake higher education studies 4.02 Year 12 applications 4.03 Non Year 12 applications	5.01 Offers made to students 5.02 Acceptances by students 5.03 Commencements (new) 5.04 Enrolments (all students) 5.05 Course transitions	6.01 Student retention 6.02 Student success 6.03 Student completion
TIER 1: CONTEXT (Pre-higher education)		
Domain 1 Early childhood development	Domain 2 Primary education	Domain 3 Secondary education
1.01 Early childhood development (physical, social and learning) 1.02 Participation in pre-school	2.01 Reading performance 2.02 Numeracy performance 2.03 School attendance	3.01 Reading performance 3.02 Numeracy performance 3.03 School attendance 3.04 Year 12 completion 3.05 ATAR 3.06 Achievement in advanced maths and science

KEY
 Regular text = Indicator uses existing data and protocols
 Red-coloured text = Indicator requires data and protocols to be created
 Blue-coloured text = Indicator uses existing data and protocols but data are potentially too weak for the purposes of the Framework
 Red text shaded grey = Combination: some requirement for data and protocols to be created but also uses existing data but data protocols do not currently exist

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This project will:

Identify a set of tested indicators within domains and tiers of which the Framework will comprise, that will allow the measurement of achievement against the Government's commitments, targets and goals in relation to equity.

Engage with stakeholders:

- To test the policy relevance, technical validity and reliability, and flexibility of the Framework and its components;
- Regarding the implementation of the Framework; and
- Regarding how the analyses and findings should be reported on/published.

Provide the following set of products:

- Framework Publication;
- Analysis and Reporting Guide;
- Implementation Plan; and
- A Forward Plan for data and statistics identification and enhancement.

Reference: Equity Performance Framework <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/feedback-on-the-draft-equity-performance-framework-for-australian-higher-education/>

Domestic Undergraduate Enrolments, Higher Education, Table A Providers, 2007-2013

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Growth (07-13)	Growth %
National	528,844	532,527	553,374	580,372	600,412	634,434	668,665	139,821	26.4%
Low SES	85,873	86,581	90,447	96,706	102,163	109,788	118,003	32,130	37.4%
Students with Disabilities	23,148	23,447	24,948	28,057	30,094	33,220	36,486	13,338	57.6%
Indigenous	6,828	6,820	7,296	7,943	8,445	9,005	9,939	3,111	45.6%
Regional	100,826	101,339	104,266	110,646	115,250	121,476	127,070	26,244	26.0%
Remote	5,428	5,240	5,368	5,532	5,572	5,804	6,069	641	11.8%
CALD/NESB	16,702	17,222	17,649	18,227	19,226	21,289	22,863	6,161	36.9%

Source: Australian Government Department of Education (2014).

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What does the data tell us?

I am happy to report that these university led initiatives supported by Government funding have already resulted in increases in access and participation for LSES students. Using the data released by the Australian Government for the 38 'Table A providers' in Australian higher education 2007-2013 we have been able to provide recent trends in student enrolment in Australian higher education.

For Domestic UG Enrolments in Higher Education in Australia there has been a 26.4% growth in headcount since 2007
With most growth post 2009 in the lead up to and eventual introduction of the demand driven system (DDS)
This level of growth is unprecedented in Australian HE.

Overall, faster rates of growth in enrolments for all key equity groups can be seen in this period. Koshy and Seymour (2014, 4) report LSES student numbers increased 37.4% in this period, and Indigenous student numbers by 45.6%. There was comparatively slower growth of 26% for regional student numbers, and 11.8% for remote student numbers.

For more information go to Briefing Paper on our website
<https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/student-equity-performance-australian-higher-education-2007-2013/>

Growth By Institutional Grouping

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Growth (07-13)	Growth (07-13) %
National	528,844	532,527	553,374	580,372	600,412	634,434	668,665	139,821	26.4%
Group of Eight	147,609	148,484	152,718	157,289	159,749	163,643	168,682	21,073	14.3%
ATN Group	94,486	95,520	97,467	99,423	102,097	109,302	115,712	21,226	22.5%
IRU Group	88,632	89,480	93,518	98,191	100,849	106,050	110,622	21,990	24.8%
RUN Group	47,650	47,782	49,716	51,627	54,072	57,295	60,188	12,538	26.3%
Unaligned Group	150,467	151,261	159,955	173,842	183,645	198,144	213,461	62,994	41.9%

Source: Australian Government Department of Education (2014).

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Enrolment, as measured by the number of students, in Table A providers increased from 528,844 in 2007 to 668,665 in 2013. This represents an **increase of 139,821 undergraduate students, or around 26.4% growth in this six year period.**

Growth was unevenly distributed across the sector, with the 'Unaligned Group' of generally newer universities witnessing a 41.9% expansion in places, raising their share of undergraduates from 28.5% in 2007 to 31.9% in 2013, with the Group of Eight seeing a reduced share from 27.9% to 25.2%. Regionally based universities grew less quickly than those based in metropolitan areas (Koshy and Seymour 2014, 3).

Around 82.5% of growth in enrolment took place after 2009, in the lead up to and eventual introduction of the demand driven system (DDS) in higher education and the removal of caps on undergraduate student places.

The Federal Government's [Review of the Demand Driven System](#) report (released 13 April 2014), has strongly endorsed the current demand-driven funding system that enables students from diverse and low socio-economic backgrounds to access higher education, a result welcomed by the [National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education \(NCSEHE\)](#).

Reference: Koshy, P. and Seymour, S. (2014). Student Equity Performance in Australian Higher Education: 2007 to 2013. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Perth: Curtin University. <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/student-equity-performance-australian-higher-education-2007-2013/>

Comparing Regional Universities

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Growth (07-13)	Growth (07-13) %
National	528,844	532,527	553,374	580,372	600,412	634,434	668,665	139,821	26.4%
Regional Universities Network	47,650	47,782	49,716	51,627	54,072	57,295	60,188	12,538	26.3%
Regionally Headquartered	89,761	88,873	92,109	97,115	99,752	105,739	110,879	21,118	23.5%
Metro Institutions with Regional Campuses	306,688	309,942	320,711	333,902	345,675	363,823	381,355	74,667	24.3%
No Regional Campuses	132,395	133,712	140,554	149,355	154,985	164,872	176,431	44,036	33.3%

Source: Australian Government Department of Education (2014).

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There has been growth within all the reporting groups, but notable is that undergraduate participation by LSES students is consistently higher where universities have a regional presence, although regional growth is lower than in metropolitan institutions.

Examining the trends in enrolment by institutional location shows that regionally headquartered universities saw growth of 23.5% which is somewhat below the national average. This includes the Regional Universities Network which saw growth between 2007 and 2013 of 26.3%.

Metropolitan institutions saw greater degrees of expansion. Metro institutions with regional campuses, saw growth of 24.3% over this period and counted for 381,355 students out of 668,665 in 2013.

Institutions without regional campuses saw the fastest growth, with their numbers increasing by 33.3%, admittedly off a low base.

Reference: Koshy, P. and Seymour, S. (2014). Student Equity Performance in Australian Higher Education: 2007 to 2013. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Perth: Curtin University. <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/student-equity-performance-australian-higher-education-2007-2013>

State Growth 2007-2013

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Growth (07-13)	Growth %
New South Wales	168,521	170,055	177,540	185,704	191,504	198,720	205,852	37,331	22.2%
Victoria	125,606	126,444	128,467	134,030	138,037	147,157	159,394	33,788	26.9%
Queensland	105,434	104,966	109,415	114,602	118,218	124,619	130,586	25,152	23.9%
Western Australia	51,857	52,367	55,201	58,311	60,740	65,231	68,164	16,307	31.4%
South Australia	38,716	38,970	40,203	41,669	43,227	45,169	46,605	7,889	20.4%
Tasmania	12,042	12,108	12,612	13,160	13,061	14,990	16,914	4,872	40.5%
Northern Territory	4,339	4,469	4,865	5,243	5,213	5,609	5,958	1,619	37.3%
Australian Capital Territory	13,810	14,094	14,734	15,776	16,403	17,141	17,642	3,832	27.7%
Multi-State ^a	8,519	9,054	10,337	11,877	14,009	15,798	17,550	9,031	106.0%

Note: a. The Australian Catholic University is the Multi-State institution.
Source: Australian Department of Education (2014).
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The marked variation in State and Territory aggregate outcomes reflects the nature of the low SES measure which in large part (two-thirds weighting) is determined by the SES of the postcode of student home addresses and relies on a national ranking of postcodes using ABS household census data to determine an area's SES (the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas or SEIFA measure).

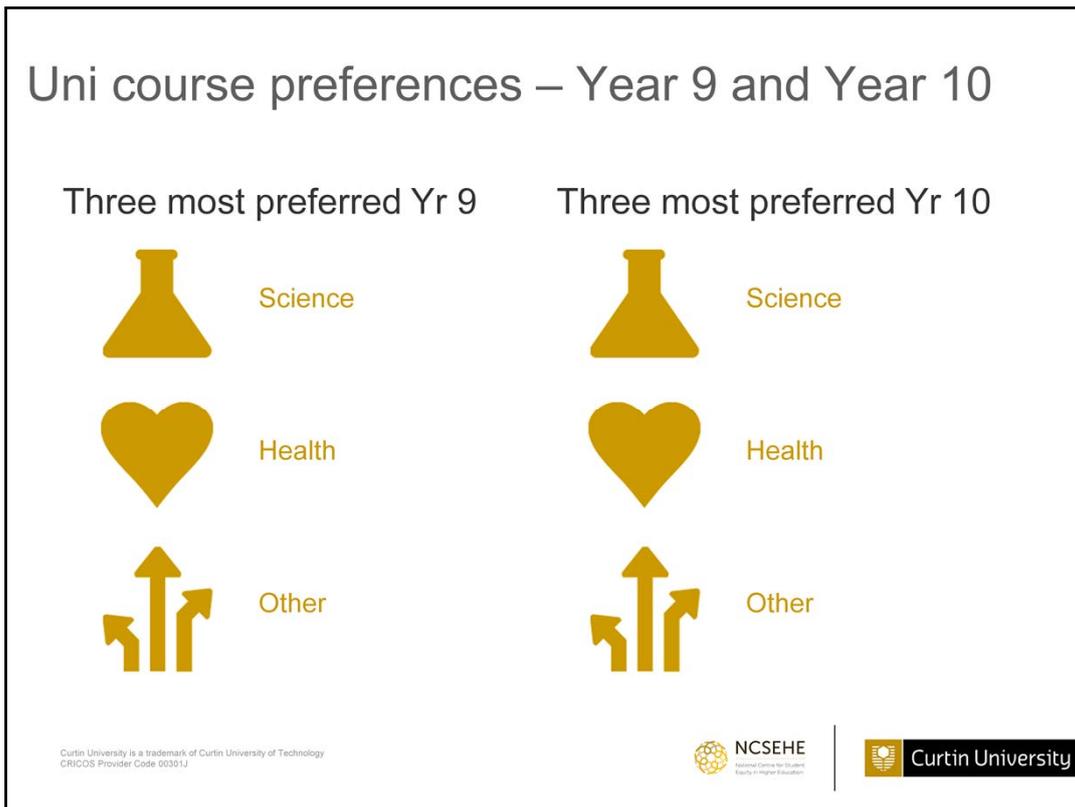
Under this ranking, states such as Victoria and Western Australia have smaller low SES populations from which students can be drawn simply because they have fewer low SES postcodes in the national ranking.

Lim and Gemici (2011, 3) have reported that SEIFA misclassifies around 40% of individuals with regards to SES. In contrast, it performs reasonably well in reporting aggregate participation in Higher Education for low SES students, but it has likely led to an under-estimate of the impact of SES on participation.

Two of the most populous states, New South Wales and Queensland, recorded growth under the national average.

Western Australia (31.4%), the Northern Territory (37.3%), and Tasmania (40.5%) saw much faster expansions off relatively smaller initial bases.

Reference: Koshy, P. and Seymour, S. (2014). Student Equity Performance in Australian Higher Education: 2007 to 2013. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Perth: Curtin University. <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/student-equity-performance-australian-higher-education-2007-2013>



Considering Regional Students in the HE reforms - we all here understand the importance of regional universities, the need to enable students to be able to study locally, as many students have limited mobility due to a number of reasons.

We need a mechanism to support equity students to attend Higher Education. Currently HEPP funded activities has worked in this space of raising aspirations, providing access and support for such students.

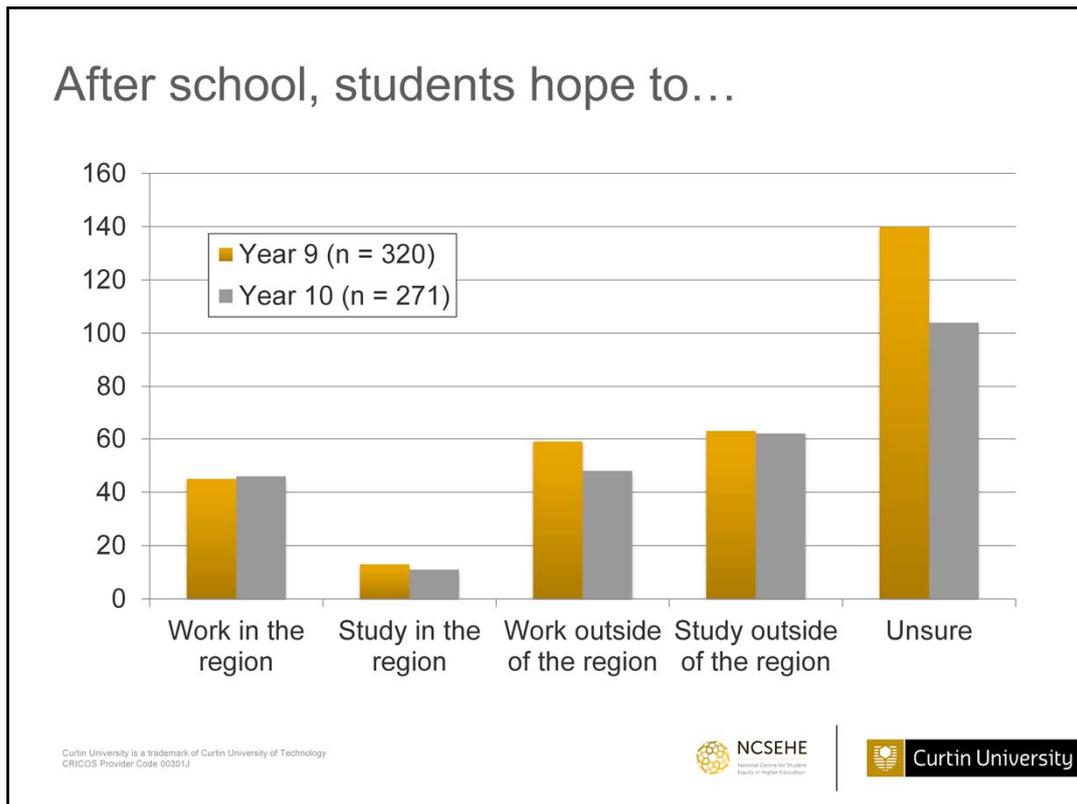
Current research we have undertaken “Regional Secondary School Students Study Choices: Planning Future Directions” shows:

Out of 698 students 249 had University Aspirations in the Goldfields region – 249 or one third planning to go to university and do ATAR to get there – 240 student responses to answer this question: *Do you have some idea about the courses you might like to do at university make at least ?? Selections from the list.* Highest was chosen by Year 9 Science (55); Health (48) and other (38) and Year 10 Science (57); Health (52) and other (46). With totals Science 112 and Health 100 and other 84 for Year 9 and Year 10 students. Unsure = low degree of uncertainty in preferences (5 students in Year 9) and (22 students in Year 10) = 27.

Regional areas compared to city areas have a lower participation rate in Higher Education, and what we have found, many from the regions are taking the GAP year to prove they are independent and then these students do not go on to study.

Reference: Fletcher, S., Boyd, D. & Trinidad, S. (2014), "Regional Secondary School

Students Study Choices: Planning Future Directions", *30th National SPERA Rural Education Conference, 3 Decades on: Reflections Upon Rural Education - Achievements, Challenges and Future Directions*, 1–3 October 2014, University of New England, Armidale.



Here is a view of the same Year 9 and Year 10 students Post Year 12 destination predictions (page 7 of paper).

We know there are many factors affecting regional participation in higher education, including issues related to “rurality and rural culture; secondary school education; family [expectations]; distance; accommodation; finances; transition and emotional support; pathway choice.

Scholarship packages have to be a combination of support for students to enable them to be supported where ever they choose to study.

The student needs to be a the ‘centre’. Support needs to be at the beginning but also along the educational journey.

We need a scholarships scheme that it is not only the cost of study itself, you need to take care of travel, books, food, living expenses so we are so pleased to hear the Government is proposing a “nationally administrated, targeted and delivered’ scholarship scheme.

On the 11th Feb at the University of Canberra we will be presenting the forum on *Equity Scholarship Provision in Australian Universities: Insights and Directions*, which is an open discussion forum about equity scholarships.

Reference: Fletcher, S., Boyd, D. & Trinidad, S. (2014), "Regional Secondary School Students Study Choices: Planning Future Directions", *30th National SPERA Rural*

Education Conference, 3 Decades on: Reflections Upon Rural Education - Achievements, Challenges and Future Directions, 1–3 October 2014, University of New England, Armidale.

In conclusion, the current funding system is delivering high quality education to more students from diverse backgrounds. It is important to ensure that access to higher education is not artificially limited and that there is a place for every person with the desire and ability to participate.

We need to provide alternative pathways for students with the required skills but who are under-prepared, due to circumstances beyond their control. We need to maintain the already high quality of our higher education system, by further improving the student attrition and success rates. For some students, these pathway programs provide the best preparation for university study and extending access to these places will help increase their chances of success, rather than enrolling directly into a bachelor degree.

There is important work still to be done from a student equity perspective, and the need for all universities to be held accountable to their social contracts.

There are still certain groups of students experiencing barriers to participation despite efforts taken by universities to remove these barriers.

Students must be at the centre of whatever we do.

We need to offer a mechanism for support of equity students to attend higher

education.

We strongly support a scholarships scheme that is “nationally administered, targeted and delivered’.

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE) is a Centre working in the equity policy, research and practice space and we will continue to promote the great work that is happening in our universities currently but also what needs to happen. We welcome you to come and explore our website and join our subscriber list.

Thank you



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Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the achievements, challenges and future directions and I look forward to sharing in the outcomes of today's forum.

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