

# Locating Aspirations: Evidence to Support Participation in Higher Education of Low SES Students from Regional and Remote Australia

October 2016 to December 2017

Laureate Professor Jenny Gore

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Modifications: Changed to meet WCAG 2.0 accessibility requirements.  
Alternate text inserted for all images. Minor typographical errors corrected.

# Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP)

## 2016 National Priorities Pool FINAL REPORT

Locating Aspirations: Evidence to Support Participation in Higher Education of Low SES Students from Regional and Remote Australia

October 2016 to December 2017

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In accordance with the Conditions of Grant, you must submit to the Department a Final Report (Clause 6.1 of Part A) and an Acquittal Report (clause 6.4 of Part A).

To meet this obligation, please submit:

- the completed **Final Report** template, in Word and PDF
- the completed and signed **Declaration** form, in PDF
- the completed **Acquittal Report** template, in Excel and PDF.

All documents must be submitted to [equity@education.gov.au](mailto:equity@education.gov.au) by **31 December 2017**. If you require additional guidance or clarification, please contact us at [equity@education.gov.au](mailto:equity@education.gov.au).

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# 1. PROJECT SUMMARY (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2 of Part A)

## Objectives

**Table 1: Project objectives**

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
Collect evidence on the educational and occupational interests of low SES students from regional and remote areas, and evidence of the ways in which location interacts with aspiration formation and understandings of the pathways and barriers to higher education	Objective fully met.
Develop evidence that will inform the design of equity initiatives and other educational interventions to better engage these students, their families and communities	Objective fully met.
Gather additional quantitative and qualitative data from low SES students who reside in outer regional, remote and very remote areas not accessed by the Aspirations Longitudinal Study and analyse differences within and between surveyed areas and community types.	Objective exceeded with more schools, students, teachers and parents participating than anticipated.

## Project Activities, Milestones and Key Performance Indicators

**Table 2: Project activities, milestones and KPIs**

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
Nov – Dec 2016	1.1 Project Team established.	Completed	1.1 Appointment of team members with the knowledge, skills and experience to successfully deliver the Project, including a Project Manager and Research Assistants.	Completed by 30 November 2016
	1.2 Preliminary cleaning of relevant, extant quantitative and qualitative data from the Aspirations Longitudinal Study.	Completed	1.2 Relevant extant quantitative and qualitative data ready for analysis by 30 November 2016.	Completed by 30 November 2016

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
Nov 2016 – Jan 2017	2.1 Submission of applications for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethics approval variation to the University of Newcastle (UoN).</li> <li>State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP) variation to the NSW Department of Education.</li> </ul>	Completed	2.1.1 Application submitted to UoN HREC by 30 November 2016.  2.1.2 SERAP variation submitted once UoN HREC approval is obtained.	Ethics application submitted to HREC 8 Dec 2016. Conditional approval received 06 Feb. Final approval 17 May 17.  SERAP application submitted upon receiving approval from HREC (17 May 17).
	2.2 Recruitment of schools for data collection.	Completed	2.2 At least ten primary, secondary and central schools from regional and remote NSW are recruited from a range of communities, including agricultural, Indigenous and mining.	37 Primary, secondary and central schools recruited to participate in the study from a range of communities in regional and remote NSW.
Nov 2016 – Mar 2017	3.1 Review of literature on regional and remote students' aspirations for higher education.	Completed	3.1.1 Literature review completed which underpins the data collection and analysis phases of the Project.  3.1.2 A journal article presenting the literature review outcomes is prepared and targeted for submission to an appropriate peer-reviewed Journal.	Literature review completed by 31 March 2017.  Journal article (Scoping Review) in preparation and will be submitted to the Australian Educational Researcher by the end of 2017.
Feb 2017 – Apr 2017	4.1 Collection of new quantitative data on student educational and occupational aspirations from participating schools through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2000 student surveys</li> <li>200 parent surveys</li> <li>200 teacher surveys.</li> </ul>	Completed	4.1.1 Data collection complete. Targeted response: 2000 student surveys, 200 parent surveys, 200 teacher surveys.	Survey data collected from 1532 students, 57 parents, 152 teachers.
Feb 2017 – Jun 2017	5.1 Analysis of relevant, extant qualitative data from the Aspirations Longitudinal Study.	Completed	5.1 Analysis of extant qualitative data including coding and identification of themes and preliminary reporting completed by 30 June 2017.	Completed by 30 June 2017.
	5.2 Analysis of relevant, extant quantitative data	Completed	5.2 All relevant descriptive statistics and	Completed by 30 June 2017.

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
	from the Aspirations Longitudinal Study.		inferential analysis of extant quantitative data and preliminary reporting on this data completely by 30 June 2017.	
Feb 2017 – Aug 2017	6.1 Cleaning and analysis of new quantitative data.	Completed	6.1 All relevant descriptive statistics and inferential analysis of new quantitative data, and preliminary reporting on this data is completed by 30 August 2017.	Completed by 15 November 2017. Survey collectors for schools were not closed until the end of Term 3 to allow schools additional time to complete surveys.
Apr 2017 – Jun 2017	7.1 Interview schedule for collection of new qualitative data from participating schools.	Completed	7.1 Interview schedule is finalised by 31 May 2017.	Completed by 30 April 2017
	7.2 Recruitment for collection of new qualitative data.	Completed	7.2 Recruitment across the participating schools is complete by 30 June 2017.	Completed by 30 June 2017
Jun 2017 – Aug 2017	8.1 Collection of new qualitative data on student educational and occupational aspirations through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 focus groups or interviews with students (-104)</li> <li>• 12 focus groups or interviews with parents (-24)</li> <li>• 12 focus groups or interviews with teachers (-48).</li> </ul>	Completed	8.1 Data collection is complete. Focus Groups/Interviews conducted with approx. 104 students, 24 parents and 48 teachers.	Completed on 18 October 2017.
Jun 2017 – Oct 2017	9.1 Analysis and cleaning of new qualitative data	Completed	9.1 Analysis of extant qualitative data including coding and identification of themes and preliminary reporting completed by 31 October 2017.	Completed by 15 December 2017. Additional interview and focus group data meant additional time was required for the analysis of data.
Aug 2017 – Dec 2017	10.1 Publication and dissemination of Project outcomes.	To be completed in 2018. Publications (as per COG) are in preparation.	10.1.1 A draft report on the Project outcomes is completed by 30 November 2017.  10.1.2 Two journal articles presenting the Project outcomes are prepared and targeted for	Draft report completed.  Two journal articles are in preparation and will be submitted to appropriate

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
			submission to appropriate peer-reviewed journals by 30 November 2017	peer-reviewed journals in early 2018.
	10.2 Conferences: Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) and Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA)	Completed	10.2.1 Papers on the Project outcomes are submitted for presentation to these conferences.  10.2.2 Project Team members attend the AARE 2017 and EPHEA 2017 conferences.	Papers relating to this project have been presented at the Education Transforms Symposium, The Inclusive Education Summit (TIES), and the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA). Papers have been accepted at AARE, EPHEA, and American Educational Research Association (AERA) conferences  Team members will attend EPHEA and AARE in late December 2017.
	10.3 Final Report and Acquittal Report.	Completed	10.3 Final Report and Acquittal Report submitted to the Department of Education and Training by 31 December 2017.	Final report to Department submitted by 31 December.

## Highlights and Issues

The project involved the analysis of the educational and career aspirations of regional and remote students from low-SES backgrounds, and reasons for those aspirations. We combined an existing data set including more than 10,000 surveys completed by school students and focus groups involving 553 of these students, with additional data collected from regional and remote areas. The new data was comprised of surveys completed by 1532 students, 57 parents, 152 teachers and interviews with 147 teachers, 42 parents and 55 teachers. Regression analyses and qualitative analyses created a rich picture of barriers and enablers to higher education participation for students from regional and remotes areas that will be available to inform outreach and other strategic activities undertaken by universities and involving schools.

Two research journal articles are in preparation for submission to national and international journals by July 2018. These include: *The aspirations for higher education of school students in regional and remote areas of Australia: A scoping review of empirical research, 1997 – 2016*, and *Presence and proximity: A study of rural students' aspirations for higher education*.

Two conference presentations were delivered at each of the following events: the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) Conference, Canberra, September 2017; the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) Conference, Brisbane, December 2017; and the Australian Association for Education Research (AARE) Conference, Canberra, December 2017. One paper was delivered at the Education Transforms Symposium, Hobart, July 2017; and one at the Inclusive Education Summit (TIES), Adelaide, 2017. A paper on the aspirations of regional and remote students in Australia has been accepted for presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, New York, April 2018.

*Did the project lead to implementable outcomes? What changes will result at your institution/nationally? How is research being translated into practice? Are there activities resulting from this project that will be continued?*

Through dissemination of project findings, we anticipate that university equity units nationally will be interested in working with our team to consider implications and activities that might be implemented to address the enduring under-representation of regional and remote students in higher education.

*Did you undertake an evaluation of your project?*

Yes  No

*Where applicable, indicate number of the following resulting from this project:*

<b>Student contacts</b>	1532
<b>Journal (or other publication) submissions</b>	N/A
<b>Conference Presentations</b>	7
<b>Websites developed</b>	N/A
<b>Educational or marketing campaigns</b>	N/A
<b>Community organisations engaged</b>	N/A
<b>Schools engaged</b>	37
<b>Parental/family contacts</b>	57

*Describe any issues that occurred during the year and any mitigation strategies you implemented.*

No issues were encountered.



## 2. OTHER PROJECT MATERIAL (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2 (b)-(e) of Part A)

**Table 3: Additional materials produced over the course of the project**

TYPE	AUTHOR	DATE OF PUBLICATION	PUBLICATION DETAILS
E.g. Journal article; conference paper; website; pamphlet, etc.			Name of journal; conference title and date; website URL, etc.

### **3. ACQUITTAL REPORT (Conditions of Grant, clause 6.4 (a)-(d), clause 6.5 (a)-(b) of Part A)**

*Have you fully expended the Grant Funds provided under the Conditions of Grant?*

Yes  No

*If the answer is No, please specify:*

- *the amount of funds remaining: \$*
- *the reason for this underspend:*

*Ensure that the completed Acquittal Report template is signed by an appropriate university officer and attached to this Final Report.*

*\*IMPORTANT NOTICE - Unspent 2016 National Priorities Pool Grant Funds*

- *Grant recipients must fully expend these 2016 National Priorities Pool funds in the project period for which the grant is made and report on this expenditure to the Commonwealth, including the amount of any unspent funds.*
- *If a provider fails to spend the full amount granted it in respect of a year, the unspent funds may be recovered by the Commonwealth.*

# DECLARATION

I declare that:

- I am authorised by the university to sign this Declaration on its behalf, and
- to the best of my knowledge, the information that I have provided in the **Final Report** and **Acquittal Report** for the HEPPP 2016 National Priorities Pool project: *Locating Aspirations: Evidence to Support Participation in Higher Education of Low SES Students from Regional and Remote Australia* is true, correct and accurate in all particulars.

I understand that:

- The provision of false or misleading information or the making of false or misleading statements to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.
- If any actual or potential conflict of interest arises, I must notify the Commonwealth immediately in writing of the facts giving rise to the actual or potential conflict of interest and to take such steps as the Commonwealth may require so as to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest that may arise.

I agree to publication of the Final Report on the Department of Education and Training website, once accepted by the department.

**Title**            Professor  
**Name**            Darrell Evans  
**Position**        Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)  
**Signature**