



**NCSEHE**

National Centre for Student  
Equity in Higher Education



**Curtin University**

# EQUITY STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

2012-2017

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All analysis included here reflects the work of the author and does not necessarily reflect the views of the NCSEHE or the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

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### **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 Training, 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
- to assist in 'closing the loop' between equity policy, research and practice by:
  - supporting and informing evaluation of current equity practice with a particular focus on identifying good practice
  - identifying innovative approaches to equity through existing research and the development of a forward research program to fill gaps in knowledge
  - 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](http://ncsehe.edu.au)

## Introduction

This NCSEHE briefing note reports on **domestic undergraduate equity student** participation in Australian higher education from 2012 to 2017. It focuses on trends among domestic undergraduate enrolments in Table A provider institutions in identified equity groups:

- Low socioeconomic status (low SES) students
- Students with Disability
- Indigenous students
- Women in Non-Traditional Areas (WINTA)
- Regional students
- Remote students
- Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) students, also referred to as 'Culturally and Linguistically Diverse' (CALD) students.

All student data reported or derived for the purposes of this document are sourced from the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET).

### Changes in Reporting

This briefing note uses 2012 as a base year of comparison for higher education equity student participation. As in previous years it reports data for domestic undergraduates only, but it now reports for both Table A Providers (major public universities) and Table B Providers (four private institutions), with system totals ('National') applying across both groups.

The definitions for equity groups reported on Page 6 have remained static in recent years for Students with Disability, Indigenous students, WINTA students and NESB students.

Over the past decade, the measures for low SES, regional and remote students – the so-called area measures – have changed due to shifts in the area of focus from postcodes to the Statistical Area 1 (SA1) (all three groups); change in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census base (2011 to 2016) (all three) and changes in regional status from the transition to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) after the 2011 Census (regional and remote students). Please see Koshy (2017) for a description of how these changes affected estimates for these equity groups in previous comparisons.

The reported figures for low SES, regional and remote students are adjusted in view of new census data – the 2011 census for 2012 to 2015 data and the 2016 census for 2016 and 2017. As a result, there is a break in the reporting series for these measures, for instance, the estimate of low SES student headcount in 2015 (2011 census areas) was 115,840 compared to that for 2016 (2016 census areas) of 126,213, representing growth of 8.95% in one year. This is partly an artefact of structural changes in census area definitions due to factors such as the cessation of the resources boom in Western Australia.

In addition, in keeping with the last version of this briefing note (Koshy, 2017), this report also reports on alternative measures for the area equity groups developed in Cardak et al. (2017). These are measures of a student's area equity status on the basis of their *first address* (address at time of enrolment) as opposed to the standard measure—reported here—of their *current address* (address during current year of study). The first address measure provides a better indication of student background over the course of their university career and also eliminates the attrition in equity status count due to students moving to other areas and consequently changing their locational status (e.g. low SES students to high SES areas; regional and remote students to metropolitan areas).

## Institutional Groupings

For each equity group measure, results are reported for the national system ('National'; 'Table A Providers'; and 'Table B Providers'), and by institutional groupings. Totals by state and territory (Table A and B Providers combined) are reported for each year.

Results for the Table A providers are reported collectively, with these universities also being classed into the following the institutional groupings on the basis of membership as at 2017-2018. These are as follows:

- **The Group of Eight:** Australian National University (ANU); The University of Melbourne; Monash University; The University of Sydney; University of New South Wales (UNSW); The University of Queensland (UQ); The University of Western Australia (UWA); and The University of 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 University; Flinders University; Griffith University; James Cook University (JCU); La Trobe University; Charles Darwin University (CDU); and Western Sydney University (WSU)\*.
- **Regional Universities Network (RUN):** Southern Cross University; University of New England (UNE); Federation University; University of the Sunshine Coast (USC); CQUniversity (CQU); and University of Southern Queensland (USQ).
- **The Unaligned Universities:** (Other Table A providers) — Macquarie University; University of Newcastle\*; University of Wollongong; Deakin University; Charles Sturt University (CSU); University of Tasmania (UTAS); Australian Catholic University (ACU); University of Canberra; Edith Cowan University (ECU); Swinburne University; and Victoria University.

\* Universities are included in institutional groupings on a consistent basis (2012 to 2017), and as a result of actual or prospective membership in 2017–2018. Two universities left or joined groupings in the last 18 months: WSU joined the IRU in October 2017 and QUT left the ATN in October 2018. Both universities are included in their respective groupings across all years of analysis. Newcastle left the IRU in 2015 and is excluded from IRU aggregate calculation throughout. QUT will be removed from the ATN in future briefing notes.

In addition, the briefing note reports on results for the Table B providers collectively, comprising:

- **Table B Providers:** Bond University (Queensland); The University of Notre Dame Australia (Western Australia); University of Divinity (Victoria); and Torrens University Australia (South Australia).

## Total Undergraduate Enrolments: 2012 to 2017

Domestic undergraduate enrolments in Table A and B Providers totalled 759,151 students in 2017, an increase of 17.7% since 2012. This represents the tail end of an expansion in student numbers since 2008, which has seen an increase of 219,468 places, or just over a 40% increase in enrolment, from 539,683. Recent years have seen a tapering off in the growth in the domestic undergraduate numbers, with the national system expanding by 2.2% in 2017 compared with growth of over 5% in 2012 and 2013. While the Table B Providers have seen faster growth of 33.7%, this has occurred off a small base of 11,469 in 2012.

Growth in undergraduate enrolments has not been uniformly distributed since 2012, with the Group of Eight seeing its undergraduate headcount peaking at 170,995 in 2014, with overall growth since 2012 being virtually static at 2.7%. The IRU has also seen below-trend growth at around 13.2% since 2012, with the other groupings seeing faster growth rates, with the ATN (3.4%) and Unaligned Group (3.7%) seeing particularly strong growth over 2016-17. Similarly, there has been a considerable divergence across the states, ranging from Tasmania (77.4% growth since 2012) to Western Australia (5.1% growth).

**Table 1: Domestic Undergraduate Enrolments, Higher Education, Table A and B Providers, 2012-17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Growth (12-17) %
<b>National<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>644,784</b>	<b>679,222</b>	<b>706,278</b>	<b>727,786</b>	<b>743,030</b>	<b>759,151</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
Table A Providers	633,315	667,517	694,583	715,907	729,598	743,816	17.4%
Table B Providers	11,469	11,705	11,695	11,879	13,432	15,335	33.7%
Group of Eight	163,062	168,067	170,955	170,016	168,914	167,516	2.7%
ATN	109,178	115,582	121,353	125,380	129,505	133,905	22.6%
IRU	116,629	121,916	126,053	129,325	130,044	131,997	13.2%
RUN	57,147	60,032	62,742	66,826	69,054	71,643	25.4%
Unaligned Group	187,299	201,920	213,480	224,360	232,081	238,755	27.5%
New South Wales	198,403	205,523	210,434	215,900	217,378	219,120	10.4%
Victoria	147,548	159,724	168,617	175,932	180,984	187,228	26.9%
Queensland	127,050	132,749	136,867	140,728	142,721	144,378	13.6%
Western Australia	73,136	76,632	78,680	76,971	77,008	76,831	5.1%
South Australia	45,156	46,584	48,086	48,922	51,214	54,115	19.8%
Tasmania	14,988	16,913	19,546	22,449	24,466	26,592	77.4%
Northern Territory	5,579	5,931	6,301	6,502	6,651	6,667	19.5%
Australian Capital Territory	17,134	17,628	18,020	18,511	19,256	20,287	18.4%
Multi-State <sup>b</sup>	15,790	17,538	19,727	21,871	23,352	23,933	51.6%

**Note:** a. Please see the *Introduction* for how measure of low SES, regional and remote equity groups in this briefing note differ from those in earlier issues. b. The Australian Catholic University is the sole multi-state institution.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Equity Student Group Definitions

This report specifically focuses on the following designated groups of underrepresented students, originally designated in *A Fair Chance for All* (DEET, 1990) and formally defined in *Equity and General Performance Indicators in Higher Education* ("the Martin Review") (Martin 1994), namely:

- **Low socioeconomic status (low SES) students:** Socioeconomic status (SES) is assigned to students based on the socioeconomic status of the ABS SA1 area in which they reside. All SA1 areas are ranked based on ABS estimates of the *Socio-Economic Index for Areas* (SEIFA) — Index of Education and Occupation (IEO), calculated using ABS Census data (ABS, 2015). Low SES students come from the bottom 25% of Australian SA1s in a national ranking.
- **Students with Disability:** Students who self-report disability to their higher education provider, usually via a formal enrolment declaration.
- **Indigenous students:** Students who self-report as Indigenous to their higher education provider, either at the time of their enrolment or during their studies
- **Women in Non-Traditional Areas of Study:** Female students who are enrolled in the natural and physical sciences; information technology; engineering and related technologies; architecture and building; agriculture, environmental and related studies; management and commerce; and the narrow field of education (economics and econometrics). This note reports on the female participation rate in the WINTA fields of study.
- **Students from regional areas:** Regional students are defined as having a permanent home address in an SA1 area that is classified as remote using the ASGS.
- **Students from remote areas:** Remote students are defined as having a permanent home address in an SA1 area that is classified as remote using the ASGS.
- **Students from a non-English speaking background (NESB):** A student is classified as coming from a non-English speaking background if they are a domestic student who arrived in Australia less than 10 years prior to the year in which the data were collected, and come from a country where the primary language spoken is not English. (Also referred to as students from 'culturally and linguistically diverse' backgrounds or 'CALD students'.)

## Student Equity Participation: 2012 to 2017

A number of equity groups, including low SES students (29.8%), Students with Disability (53.6%) and Indigenous students (51.6%), have seen consistently higher rates of enrolments over the last five years in comparison with the national system (17.7%). In contrast, the Regional (14.1%), Remote (13.6%) and WINTA (14.1%) student groups have seen lower rates of expansion.

**Table 2: Domestic Undergraduate Enrolments, Higher Education, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Growth (12-17) %
<b>National</b>	<b>644,784</b>	<b>679,222</b>	<b>706,278</b>	<b>727,786</b>	<b>743,030</b>	<b>759,151</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
Low SES	99,838	107,219	111,004	115,840	126,293	129,554	29.8%
Students with Disability	33,706	37,032	40,679	44,856	47,970	51,773	53.6%
Indigenous	9,142	10,018	10,939	11,845	12,878	13,855	51.6%
WINTA	115,224	119,810	124,159	125,888	128,210	131,452	14.1%
Regional	134,849	140,510	145,018	149,001	150,441	153,800	14.1%
Remote	5,431	5,682	5,848	5,911	6,036	6,167	13.6%
NESB	21,361	22,943	25,181	26,727	27,223	27,230	27.5%

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

Three equity groups have seen increases in levels of participation: Low SES students (15.5% in 2012 to 17.1% in 2017) – albeit, in part due to the shift in census base from 2011 to 2016); Students with Disability (5.2% to 6.8%); and Indigenous (1.4% to 1.8%). In keeping with enrolment patterns, Remote student share has remained static at 0.8%, while Regional students share has declined – 20.9% to 20.3% -- again, in part due to the changes in the area measure. WINTA (40.6% of total enrolments in the WINTA disciplines in 2017) and NESB (3.6% of total enrolment in 2017) student shares have stabilised in recent years.

**Table 3: Student Equity Enrolment Proportions, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17<sup>a</sup>**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Low SES	15.5%	15.8%	15.7%	15.9%	17.0%	17.1%
Students with Disability	5.2%	5.5%	5.8%	6.2%	6.5%	6.8%
Indigenous	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%
WINTA <sup>a</sup>	41.1%	40.7%	40.6%	40.3%	40.3%	40.6%
Regional	20.9%	20.7%	20.5%	20.5%	20.3%	20.3%
Remote	0.84%	0.84%	0.83%	0.81%	0.81%	0.81%
NESB	3.3%	3.4%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%	3.6%

**Note:** a. WINTA share is female share of total enrolment in non-traditional areas.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Low SES Student Participation: 2012 to 2017

In Australia, Low SES students are identified using ABS census data for local area of their *current* place of residence, with low SES students classified as living in areas with the lowest 25% of population (the low SES quartile) based on their SEIFA index score. The data reported in Table 4a includes a shift in the underlying census definition of the low SES quartile from the 2011 to 2016 census from 2016 onwards.

Low SES student participation has always been considerably below parity with their population share (25%), at around 15% to 16%. In recent years, the low SES share has increased, rising to 17.1% in 2017. Although this is partly due a shift associated with the use of 2016 census data, representation can be seen to have increased between 2012 and 2015, years in which the 2011 census was used as the basis of classification.

The four Table B Providers have considerably lower participation rates than the national system, reaching 12.1% in 2017 after years in single digits. This reflects their status as private providers until the recent extension of HECS-HELP funding to students at Notre Dame, Bond and Torrens. Among Table A Providers, the Group of Eight has historically seen low rates of participation, with 2017 (9.8%) seeing a decline from last year's peak. Across the other groupings, a noteworthy trend is the static share among the RUN institutions between 2012 and 2017, the moderate gains among Unaligned institutions, and stronger gains among ATN (a 15.4% share in 2017) and IRU (21.9%) institutions.

**Table 4a: Low SES Enrolment Proportion, By Institutional Groupings, Table A and B Providers, 2012-17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>National – Low SES<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
Table A Providers	15.6%	15.9%	15.9%	16.1%	17.1%	17.2%
Table B Providers	7.8%	8.1%	7.7%	7.8%	9.8%	12.1%
Group of Eight	8.8%	9.1%	8.9%	8.9%	10.0%	9.8%
ATN	13.9%	14.0%	13.9%	14.2%	15.6%	15.4%
IRU	19.3%	19.8%	19.8%	20.2%	21.8%	21.9%
RUN	27.6%	27.4%	26.8%	26.8%	27.5%	27.6%
Unaligned Group	16.7%	16.9%	17.0%	17.0%	17.5%	17.6%

**Note:** a. Please see the *Introduction* for how measure of low SES, regional and remote equity groups and institutional groupings in this briefing note differ from those in earlier issues.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

As most Australian undergraduate students attend an institution in their home state, institutional low SES shares will in large part reflect the size of the low SES population in their state or territory. This is important, as in a national ranking, state and territory shares of low SES population will vary around 25%. This can be seen in Table 4b, with the low SES share of population in the 2016 census ranging from 0.2% in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) to 43.3% in Tasmania. Also of interest is the shift in low SES population estimates across censuses, with Western Australia seeing an increase in its low SES share of population from 22.7% to 24.1% at the expense of New South Wales (24.4% in 2016), Queensland (29.8%) and Tasmania (43.3%, from 45.6% in 2011).



**Table 4b: Low SES Population Share by State, National Ranking of SA1 Areas (2011 and 2016 Census Estimates)**

	2011 Census	2016 Census
New South Wales	24.6%	24.4%
Victoria	20.6%	20.7%
Queensland	29.9%	29.8%
Western Australia	22.7%	24.1%
South Australia	30.7%	31.0%
Tasmania	45.6%	43.3%
Northern Territory	23.0%	23.3%
Australian Capital Territory	0.2%	0.2%

Source: ABS 2011 Census from Koshy (2017) and 2016 Census from author calculations.

This pattern of measured disadvantage is reflected in low SES undergraduate participation rates across the states and territories (Table 4c), with historically higher rates of participation in Queensland (18.1% in 2017), South Australia (20.3%) and Tasmania (24.7%), and lower rates elsewhere, notably the Australian Capital Territory (5.4%).

**Table 4c: Low SES Enrolment Proportion, All Institutions in State or Territory, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
New South Wales	16.6%	17.0%	16.9%	17.0%	18.2%	18.2%
Victoria	13.7%	14.1%	14.1%	14.3%	15.5%	15.5%
Queensland	17.5%	17.6%	17.2%	17.4%	17.9%	18.1%
Western Australia	11.7%	12.0%	12.0%	12.5%	14.9%	15.1%
South Australia	17.9%	18.8%	19.0%	19.4%	20.2%	20.3%
Tasmania	25.1%	25.2%	25.7%	25.4%	24.7%	24.7%
Northern Territory	18.6%	18.1%	17.4%	17.5%	18.5%	18.9%
Australian Capital Territory	5.7%	5.6%	5.5%	5.3%	5.3%	5.4%
Multi-State	12.9%	12.3%	12.0%	12.1%	13.2%	13.0%

Source: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Assigning SES based on First Address

Australia assigns SES status to students on the basis of their *current* address at the time of reporting and SEIFA and locational data in their local SA1 area. However, Cardak et al. (2017) have pointed to evidence to support the use of *first* or commencing address as an alternative, as this better characterises the student's status at enrolment. The rationale for this is that students in low SES SA1 areas often move to urban addresses in middle or high SES SA1 areas after the commencement of their studies and are thereby 're-classified' over the duration of their studies. This measure has been developed by DET, Table 5 reports estimates of low SES participation in 2016 and 2017 using the first address measure, with the 2017 current measure being included for comparative purposes.

The first address measure defines 18% of all Table A and B undergraduates in 2017 as low SES, compared with 17.1% using the current measure, an increase of around 6% (where the ratio of the two equals 1.06). The Group of Eight (9%) and ATN (8%) institutions also see their calculated shares rise, with an even more pronounced effect in Queensland and WA (both 10%) and the Australian Capital Territory (18%).

**Table 5: Low SES Enrolment Proportion, SA1 Measure – First Address, 2016 and 2017; and 2017 SA1 Measure – Current Address**

SA1 – First Address	2016	2017	2017 Current Address <sup>a</sup>	2017: Ratio of First to Current Address
<b>National – Low SES</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>1.06</b>
Table A Providers	18.4%	18.2%	17.2%	1.06
Table B Providers	10.6%	12.5%	12.1%	1.04
<b>Group of Eight</b>				
Group of Eight	11.1%	10.7%	9.8%	1.09
ATN	17.0%	16.7%	15.4%	1.08
IRU	23.5%	23.1%	21.9%	1.06
RUN	29.5%	29.1%	27.6%	1.05
Unaligned Group	18.3%	18.1%	17.6%	1.03
<b>States and Territories</b>				
New South Wales	19.1%	19.0%	18.2%	1.04
Victoria	15.8%	15.9%	15.5%	1.03
Queensland	20.2%	19.8%	18.1%	1.10
Western Australia	17.1%	16.7%	15.1%	1.10
South Australia	22.0%	21.8%	20.3%	1.07
Tasmania	26.1%	25.0%	24.7%	1.01
Northern Territory	18.8%	19.1%	18.9%	1.01
Australian Capital Territory	6.2%	6.4%	5.4%	1.18
Multi-State	13.5%	13.6%	13.0%	1.04

**Note:** a. Estimates using the *current address* are sourced from Table 4a and 4c above.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Students with Disability Participation: 2012 to 2017

There has been a continued increase in the proportion of domestic undergraduates reporting disability in recent years, rising from 5.2% in 2012 to 6.8% in 2018. As disability is self-reported, this increase may be partly due to the increased willingness of students to self-identify. If so, the decline in reporting among Table B providers between 2016 and 2017 (5.5% to 3.8%) is anomalous.

Regional universities (RUN) continue to report the highest levels of enrolment of students with disability (8.1%), with considerable variation observed across the states and territories, with participation ranging from 9.2% in South Australia to 5.5% in Queensland.

**Table 6: Students with Disability Enrolment Proportion, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A and B Providers, 2012-17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>National – Disability</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>
Table A Providers	5.2%	5.5%	5.8%	6.2%	6.5%	6.9%
Table B Providers	4.6%	5.0%	5.5%	5.9%	5.5%	3.8%
<b>Groupings</b>						
Group of Eight	4.6%	4.7%	5.3%	6.1%	6.3%	6.6%
ATN	4.7%	4.6%	4.7%	4.9%	5.2%	5.6%
IRU	5.2%	5.5%	5.7%	6.0%	6.3%	6.9%
RUN	6.0%	6.8%	7.2%	7.8%	8.2%	8.1%
Unaligned Group	5.9%	6.2%	6.3%	6.6%	6.9%	7.4%
<b>States and Territories</b>						
New South Wales	4.8%	5.1%	5.6%	6.3%	6.6%	7.0%
Victoria	5.1%	5.3%	5.6%	6.0%	6.3%	6.8%
Queensland	4.2%	4.5%	4.8%	5.1%	5.3%	5.5%
Western Australia	5.6%	5.7%	5.8%	6.2%	6.4%	6.5%
South Australia	8.0%	7.9%	8.2%	8.7%	9.1%	9.2%
Tasmania	8.7%	9.0%	8.9%	7.7%	7.7%	7.6%
Northern Territory	5.7%	5.5%	5.1%	4.6%	4.8%	5.5%
Australian Capital Territory	6.3%	6.5%	6.8%	7.5%	7.9%	9.1%
Multi-State	6.7%	6.6%	6.2%	5.9%	5.9%	6.9%

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Indigenous Student Participation: 2012 to 2017

Indigenous students accounted for 1.8% of all domestic undergraduate enrolments in 2017, representing a steady increase in representation over the past six years. The RUN group of institutions have access rates approaching almost double that of the national average, while states and territories with larger Indigenous populations – Queensland (2.7%) and the Northern Territory (6.6%) – also see higher rates of participation.

**Table 7: Indigenous Enrolment Proportion, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>National – Indigenous</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>
Table A Providers	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%
Table B Providers	0.8%	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%	1.2%	1.6%
<b>Group of Eight</b>						
Group of Eight	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
ATN	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
IRU	1.9%	1.9%	2.1%	2.2%	2.4%	2.5%
RUN	2.4%	2.5%	2.7%	3.0%	3.1%	3.4%
Unaligned Group	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	2.0%
<b>States and Territories</b>						
New South Wales	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	2.1%
Victoria	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%
Queensland	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%	2.3%	2.6%	2.7%
Western Australia	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%
South Australia	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%
Tasmania	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	2.1%	2.3%	2.3%
Northern Territory	7.4%	6.9%	6.6%	6.4%	6.3%	6.6%
Australian Capital Territory	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.5%
Multi-State	2.1%	1.9%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Women in Non-Traditional Areas (WINTA) Student Participation: 2012 to 2017

This briefing note defines the WINTA participation rate as the female share of enrolments in identified WINTA fields of education (as per p. 5). At the national level and among Table A providers, the WINTA share of domestic undergraduate enrolments in these disciplines has hovered between 40% and 41.1% since 2016. In 2017, a 40.6% share was reported nationally.

No institutional grouping among the Table A Provider institutions had a WINTA share exceeding 45% in 2017, with RUN reporting a share of 44.9%. A similar pattern is observed across the states and territories (Table A and B Providers).

By contrast, in Table B providers, the female share of enrolments in WINTA fields of education has exceeded 50% in every year of comparison and reached 65.3% in 2017, representing significant growth since 2015. Australia's multi-state university, the Australian Catholic University, also has a majority female enrolment in non-traditional areas.

**Table 8: WINTA Enrolment Proportion, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>National – WINTA<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>41.1%</b>	<b>40.7%</b>	<b>40.6%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>40.6%</b>
Table A Providers	41.0%	40.7%	40.5%	40.2%	40.1%	40.3%
Table B Providers	50.3%	50.7%	51.5%	50.6%	58.2%	65.3%
Group of Eight	40.4%	40.3%	40.2%	40.3%	40.9%	41.2%
ATN	37.5%	37.3%	37.0%	37.0%	36.9%	36.8%
IRU	44.5%	43.9%	43.2%	42.3%	42.1%	42.4%
RUN	45.9%	45.6%	44.5%	44.3%	44.1%	44.9%
Unaligned Group	40.8%	40.4%	40.9%	40.3%	39.7%	39.6%
New South Wales	40.7%	40.1%	39.6%	39.3%	39.4%	39.5%
Victoria	40.2%	40.0%	39.6%	39.4%	39.4%	39.4%
Queensland	42.5%	42.2%	41.5%	41.3%	41.1%	41.5%
Western Australia	42.3%	42.4%	42.6%	42.7%	42.6%	42.5%
South Australia	39.0%	38.2%	38.1%	38.0%	40.1%	42.8%
Tasmania	35.3%	36.7%	47.3%	44.9%	39.8%	37.5%
Northern Territory	46.3%	45.9%	44.1%	43.2%	44.6%	43.5%
Australian Capital Territory	43.0%	42.2%	42.2%	41.5%	41.5%	41.8%
Multi-State	49.5%	51.6%	51.6%	51.6%	52.8%	55.3%

**Note:** a. WINTA enrolment share is per cent of total enrolments in WINTA disciplines.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Regional Student Participation: 2012 to 2017

Regional student participation in undergraduate course has been around 20% in recent years, reaching 20.3% in 2017. Regional enrolments tend to be concentrated among Table A Providers, with Table B Providers having much lower rates of participation (8.8% in 2017) due to their primarily metropolitan locations. Among Table A Providers, the RUN institutions have the highest proportion of regional students (49.7% in 2017) although their level of representation has been in decline in recent years as these institutions expand their offerings in metropolitan areas either through satellite campuses or online offerings. The IRU (23.4%) and Unaligned (24%) institutional groupings have higher rates of participation than the national average, while the Go8 (10%) and ATN (9%) have rates less than half.

Regional enrolments track regional population shares within states and territories, with Queensland (28.4%), Tasmania (63.9%) and the Northern Territory (53.7%) having the highest rates of participation in 2017, and Western Australia the lowest at 9.9%.

**Table 9: Regional Enrolment Proportion, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>National – Regional<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>20.7%</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>
Table A Providers	21.2%	20.9%	20.8%	20.7%	20.5%	20.5%
Table B Providers	6.7%	6.3%	6.1%	6.1%	7.6%	8.8%
<b>Group of Eight</b>						
Group of Eight	11.0%	11.3%	10.9%	10.5%	10.2%	10.0%
ATN	9.6%	9.0%	9.0%	9.0%	9.0%	9.0%
IRU	22.9%	22.8%	22.7%	22.3%	22.3%	23.4%
RUN	54.7%	53.4%	52.4%	51.4%	51.0%	49.7%
Unaligned Group	25.4%	25.1%	25.0%	24.9%	24.3%	24.0%
<b>States and Territories</b>						
New South Wales	18.7%	18.7%	18.1%	17.8%	17.4%	17.0%
Victoria	18.9%	18.6%	18.8%	18.7%	18.7%	18.5%
Queensland	28.1%	27.7%	27.4%	27.3%	27.3%	28.4%
Western Australia	9.7%	9.7%	9.7%	10.0%	9.8%	9.9%
South Australia	14.4%	14.1%	14.4%	14.2%	14.3%	14.2%
Tasmania	84.8%	80.4%	77.1%	72.2%	67.4%	63.9%
Northern Territory	53.8%	53.1%	51.8%	51.4%	53.0%	53.7%
Australian Capital Territory	17.8%	17.5%	16.5%	15.9%	15.4%	15.4%
Multi-State	11.1%	10.4%	9.7%	9.6%	9.1%	8.9%

**Note: a.** Please see the *Introduction* for how measure of low SES, regional and remote equity groups and institutional groupings in this briefing note differ from those in earlier issues.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Assigning Regional Status based on First Address

Examining regional status based on *first address* tends to increase the rate of regional participation as it captures students' status at enrolment when they are more likely to cite a regional address. This can be seen in the *first address* estimate of the national regional participation rate in 2017, which at 21.2% is 5% higher than the *current address* estimate of 20.3% (the ratio between the two being 1.05). A similar pattern can be seen across institutional groupings metropolitan regions, such as Table B Providers (a 23% increase), the Group of Eight (13%) and ATN (23%), and states and territories with relatively small populations and limited campus presence in the regions (South Australia and Western Australia).

**Table 10: Regional Enrolment Proportion, SA1 Measure – First Address, 2016 and 2017; and 2017 SA1 Measure – Current Address**

Regional – First Address	2016	2017	2017 Current Address <sup>a</sup>	2017: Ratio of First to Current Address
<b>National – Regional</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>1.05</b>
Table A Providers	21.7%	21.4%	20.5%	1.04
Table B Providers	9.2%	10.8%	8.8%	1.23
Group of Eight	11.6%	11.3%	10.0%	1.13
ATN	10.9%	11.0%	9.0%	1.23
IRU	23.3%	23.3%	23.4%	0.99
RUN	51.4%	50.2%	49.7%	1.01
Unaligned Group	25.3%	24.7%	24.0%	1.03
New South Wales	18.0%	17.6%	17.0%	1.04
Victoria	19.6%	19.4%	18.5%	1.05
Queensland	29.8%	29.8%	28.4%	1.05
Western Australia	11.2%	11.2%	9.9%	1.13
South Australia	16.0%	16.0%	14.2%	1.13
Tasmania	66.3%	60.3%	63.9%	0.94
Northern Territory	50.0%	51.2%	53.7%	0.95
Australian Capital Territory	18.3%	18.3%	15.4%	1.18
Multi-State	10.9%	10.9%	8.9%	1.22

**Note:** a. Estimates using the *current address* are sourced from Table 9.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Remote Student Participation: 2012 to 2017

Remote student participation in Australia has remained static at 0.81% over the past three years but is in decline compared with earlier years reflecting the lower rate of growth in remote enrolments.

Patterns of remote participation mirror those of regional participation, with higher participation seen in the IRU (1.4%) and RUN (1.47%) institutional groupings and lower among Group of Eight (0.47%) and ATN (0.68%) groups – with the latter seeing a decline remote participation rate since 2012. Remote enrolments are largely determined by the size of the remote population in each state and territory, with the 11.09% remote participation rate of CDU, the sole institution in the Northern Territory, reflecting the Territory's large remote population.

**Table 11: Remote Enrolment Proportion, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>National – Remote<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>0.84%</b>	<b>0.84%</b>	<b>0.83%</b>	<b>0.81%</b>	<b>0.81%</b>	<b>0.81%</b>
Table A Providers	0.83%	0.83%	0.83%	0.81%	0.81%	0.82%
Table B Providers	1.31%	1.12%	0.94%	0.76%	0.76%	0.60%
Group of Eight	0.49%	0.53%	0.51%	0.49%	0.48%	0.47%
ATN	0.84%	0.80%	0.73%	0.72%	0.71%	0.68%
IRU	1.37%	1.37%	1.39%	1.35%	1.35%	1.40%
RUN	1.53%	1.54%	1.56%	1.52%	1.48%	1.47%
Unaligned Group	0.58%	0.57%	0.59%	0.59%	0.62%	0.61%
New South Wales	0.42%	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.42%	0.43%
Victoria	0.20%	0.24%	0.25%	0.26%	0.28%	0.29%
Queensland	1.23%	1.24%	1.24%	1.18%	1.10%	1.11%
Western Australia	1.77%	1.70%	1.65%	1.58%	1.61%	1.52%
South Australia	1.51%	1.54%	1.42%	1.47%	1.45%	1.38%
Tasmania	0.77%	0.84%	0.93%	1.10%	1.13%	1.20%
Northern Territory	10.15%	10.08%	10.31%	10.34%	10.70%	11.09%
Australian Capital Territory	0.19%	0.22%	0.22%	0.22%	0.25%	0.27%
Multi-State	0.24%	0.25%	0.20%	0.21%	0.14%	0.16%

**Note: a.** Please see the *Introduction* for how measure of low SES, regional and remote equity groups and institutional groupings in this briefing note differ from those in earlier issues.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).



## Assigning Remote Status based on First Address

The use of *first address* to assign remote status results in a more pronounced increase in the participation rate in relation to remote status compared with regional status. The national remote share rises from 0.81% under the *current address* measure to 0.91% in 2017. This is particularly noticeable for the Group of Eight (0.55% from 0.47%) and ATN (0.87% from 0.68%). As was the case with the introduction of *first address* in the measurement of regional status, both South Australia (1.72% from 1.38%) and Western Australia (1.88% from 1.52%) see substantial increases in their remote share of enrolments.

**Table 12: Remote Enrolment Proportion, SA1 Measure – First Address, 2016 and 2017; and 2017 SA1 Measure – Current Address**

Remote– First Address	2016	2017	2017 Current Address <sup>a</sup>	2017: Ratio of First to Current Address
<b>National – Remote<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>0.92%</b>	<b>0.91%</b>	<b>0.81%</b>	<b>1.12</b>
Table A Providers	0.92%	0.91%	0.82%	1.11
Table B Providers	0.93%	0.84%	0.60%	1.40
Group of Eight	0.56%	0.55%	0.47%	1.17
ATN	0.89%	0.87%	0.68%	1.28
IRU	1.52%	1.50%	1.40%	1.07
RUN	1.60%	1.59%	1.47%	1.08
Unaligned Group	0.67%	0.67%	0.61%	1.10
New South Wales	0.44%	0.46%	0.43%	1.07
Victoria	0.30%	0.31%	0.29%	1.07
Queensland	1.31%	1.26%	1.11%	1.14
Western Australia	1.87%	1.88%	1.52%	1.24
South Australia	1.80%	1.72%	1.38%	1.25
Tasmania	1.24%	1.19%	1.20%	0.99
Northern Territory	10.32%	10.18%	11.09%	0.92
Australian Capital Territory	0.33%	0.38%	0.27%	1.41
Multi-State	0.21%	0.22%	0.16%	1.38

**Note:** a. Please see the *Introduction* for how measure of low SES, regional and remote equity groups and institutional groupings in this briefing note differ from those in earlier issues. b. Estimates using the *current address* are sourced from Table 11.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) Student Participation: 2012 to 2017

The enrolment share of NESB students remained steady at around 3.6% in 2017, reflecting a levelling off since 2014. The NESB group is unique among equity groups in that institutions in the Group of Eight (4.4%) and ATN (4.7%) have higher levels of NESB enrolment than the national average, while Table B Providers (1.2% in 2017) and regional institutions (i.e. RUN, with 1.3%) have lower levels of participation. Patterns across the states and territories reflect their respective NESB population shares.

**Table 13: Non-English Speaking Background (NESB)<sup>a</sup> Enrolment Proportion, By Groupings and State and Territory, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>National – NESB<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
Table A Providers	3.4%	3.4%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%	3.6%
Table B Providers	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%
Group of Eight	4.0%	4.0%	4.3%	4.5%	4.4%	4.4%
ATN	4.0%	4.3%	4.7%	4.9%	4.9%	4.7%
IRU	4.1%	4.2%	4.3%	4.4%	4.5%	4.4%
RUN	1.4%	1.2%	1.4%	1.4%	1.2%	1.3%
Unaligned Group	2.6%	2.5%	2.6%	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%
New South Wales	3.6%	3.4%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
Victoria	3.7%	4.0%	4.1%	4.2%	4.1%	4.0%
Queensland	2.5%	2.5%	2.7%	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%
Western Australia	3.0%	3.1%	3.4%	3.6%	3.6%	3.5%
South Australia	4.1%	4.4%	4.5%	4.5%	4.2%	3.9%
Tasmania	1.7%	2.0%	2.2%	3.2%	4.1%	4.7%
Northern Territory	3.5%	3.7%	4.1%	4.9%	5.1%	5.4%
Australian Capital Territory	4.0%	3.9%	4.2%	3.9%	3.6%	3.3%
Multi-State	2.5%	2.5%	2.7%	3.0%	3.0%	2.6%

**Note:** a. NESB students are also often referred to as 'CALD students' – students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

## Summary

In 2017, there were 759,151 domestic undergraduate students enrolled in Table A and B Provider institutions in Australia. This represents an increase in enrolments of 17.7% since 2012, with an expansion in equity student numbers in the Low SES, Disability, Indigenous and NESB groups which was faster than overall growth. However, the WINTA (14.1%), Regional (14.1%) and Remote (13.6%) groups all saw lower growth rates.

The participation rates of equity groups reflect their growth relative to that of the general population, with WINTA and Regional participation rates declining and the Remote rate remaining state between 2012 and 2017.

These estimates are likely to be conservative though, as the use of *first address* to define locational disadvantage for low SES (18.0% in 2017), Regional (21.2%) and Remote (0.91%) students, shows significant increases in the rate of participation among students in those groups.

**Table 14: Student Equity Enrolments and Enrolment Shares, Table A and B Providers, 2012–17<sup>a</sup>**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Growth (12-17) %
<b>National<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>644,784</b>	<b>679,222</b>	<b>706,278</b>	<b>727,786</b>	<b>743,030</b>	<b>759,151</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
Low SES	99,838	107,219	111,004	115,840	126,293	129,554	29.8%
Students with Disability	33,706	37,032	40,679	44,856	47,970	51,773	53.6%
Indigenous	9,142	10,018	10,939	11,845	12,878	13,855	51.6%
WINTA	115,224	119,810	124,159	125,888	128,210	131,452	14.1%
Regional	134,849	140,510	145,018	149,001	150,441	153,800	14.1%
Remote	5,431	5,682	5,848	5,911	6,036	6,167	13.6%
NESB	21,361	22,943	25,181	26,727	27,223	27,230	27.5%
<b>Equity Shares (%)</b>							<b>Change in Share (12–17) PPT</b>
Low SES	15.5%	15.8%	15.7%	15.9%	17.0%	17.1%	1.6
Students with Disability	5.2%	5.5%	5.8%	6.2%	6.5%	6.8%	1.6
Indigenous	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	0.4
WINTA <sup>c</sup>	41.1%	40.7%	40.6%	40.3%	40.3%	40.6%	-0.5
Regional	20.9%	20.7%	20.5%	20.5%	20.3%	20.3%	-0.6
Remote	0.84%	0.84%	0.83%	0.81%	0.81%	0.81%	-0.03
NESB	3.3%	3.4%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%	3.6%	0.3

**Note:** a. Data reported from Tables 2 and 3. b. Please see the *Introduction* for how measure of low SES, regional and remote equity groups and institutional groupings in this briefing note differ from those in earlier issues. c. The WINTA percentage is the female share of total enrolments in non-traditional areas.

**Source:** Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2018).

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