

Organisation: MyStay International Pty Ltd (Owner of Australian Homestay Network)

Question 1. How can government, institutions and communities better promote the valuable and unique experience of studying and living in regional Australia?

The key to growth in international students in regional Australia is making sure that there is enough infrastructure to support student satisfaction indicators in line with the overall student experience. Our group has seen the success of a welcoming homestay accommodation/orientation service in the major cities, which could be delivered even better in regional Australia. Providing a clear overlap between living, learning and academic outcomes with community immersion becomes a unique selling point particularly for iconic regional cities in Australia. The inclusion of short trips to major cities should be part of the curriculum. Again, properly managed, standards based homestay can accommodate in multiple cities within the same network. We would be happy to share our information with you.

Question 2. What are the barriers to regional destinations and their education institutions hosting more international students?

Access, information, experience, partnerships, accommodation, student services & education quality. Our group has sufficient experience and networks to assist in all of these areas if required.

Question 3. How can metropolitan and regional education institutions work together to create regional study opportunities for international students in ways that benefit the students, the regional communities and the institutional partners?

Regional Australia potentially offers better price points for the bulk of the education course to be delivered in the regions. Co-articulation arrangements are an advantage so that student could technically spend a short period attending the "city" university, but the bulk of their time in safer, friendlier, cheaper, more welcoming environment without losing the value of the certification. Having students in regional Australia will boost the economy as well as household incomes (particularly if Homestay is at the forefront of the orientation/accommodation services)

Question 4. What are the best ways to communicate the benefits of spending time in regional Australia to prospective international students and their parents?

Some of the highlights should be:

Experience "Real" Australia and still visit the major cities. Safer, friendlier, cheaper, more welcoming environment. Globally competitive Certification equal to major city certification.

Question 5. Given the strong interplay between tourism and education, particularly in regional settings, how can government, institutions and the community capitalise on the relationship, map its value and promote regional strengths?

Establish standards and student services related to international students. Include all stakeholders: Government (All levels and appropriate departments), Education Providers (All

sectors including Govt. and Non-Govt.), industry bodies, service providers, tourism bodies, regional industry groups, etc. Our group would happy to be available to assist with this.

Question 6. What role could fee structures and scholarships, education agent promotions, and changes to government policy settings play to encourage more students to study in regional Australia (e.g. migration incentives)?

Streamlined visa processing
Migration incentives or credits
Transfer options after minimum regional periods
Discounted tuition options
Better quality student experience

Question 7. Is there a need for greater insights into the motivations and the experience of international students in regional areas relative to metropolitan areas, using instruments such as the International Student Barometer and/or other targeted research?

No. If this is positioned correctly there will be high demand without the need for further research. The market for international education is so large, that this option would create another layer of interest, as well as unique selling points in it's own right.

Question 8. Any other comments?

Our group was heavily involved in the 2012/13 asylum seeker placement in regional Australia, and this was hugely successful for both the asylum seeker and the community at large. The hosts used for homestay were generally far more successful, that the more established metropolitan program. Do not underestimate the potential of regional Australia delivering a much better student experience than the big city on the proviso that the student still gets a capital city level qualification in the process.