

## **Organisation: Bond University**

Thank-you for the opportunity to respond to the Growing International Education in Regional Australia review. The Council for International Education has been set a complex challenge. In finding ways to encourage more international students to study in regional areas, they must also ensure that Australia's national brand as a high-quality destination for tertiary education is protected and strengthened.

The consultation paper has helpfully identified a broad range of issues and questions relevant to this challenge. There will be many submissions making recommendations for ways forward and, in this context, Bond would like to draw attention to the Study Gold Coast submission.

More specifically, Bond would like to focus on the inconsistent definitions of 'regional Australia' used across higher education and related policies and regulations, which is a source of significant confusion and creates inconsistent outcomes.

The numerous definitions of "regional" create a web of complexity for policy development, providers and students. For example, recent public funding allocations to regional universities benefitted at least one campus located in a major city. There is also incoherency in the current definition of "regional" for migration purposes where, for example, the Gold Coast is classified metropolitan and Perth and Adelaide are classified as regional.

As the discussion paper outlines, the Department of Education and Training uses the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) remoteness structure in its international education publications. While this may be a more objective approach, it has no practical relevance for higher education policy. Policies and decisions, that have the objective of growing international students in the regions, which are defined and targeted using the current classifications systems, take no account of the capacity of particular regions.

The policy framework that comes from this review should therefore focus on identifying those regions that can deliver a high-quality education experience consistent with the national brand. When appraising regional capacity, characteristics such as infrastructure, services, state and local government support, vibrant employer economies, and opportunities to leverage the synergies between industry and education should be considered.