

## **Organisation: Dr Sabih Rehman**

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

I am associated with Charles Sturt University and am involved with international student recruitment for our newly initiated course in regional Australia ( Port Macquarie) . We face a number of challenges in retaining international students in regional areas due to limited job opportunities especially in discipline specific areas e.g. IT etc. Government should encourage businesses to setup their operations in regional locations to provide internship/part-time job opportunities to international students. Lack of suitable/affordable accommodation is also an issue in regional areas. Having better transport facilities to connect these regional towns with capital cities is also very important so that students don't feel isolated and will also encourage people to move to regional areas for employment opportunities.

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

Some of the barriers faced by institutions in regional areas are as follows:

Students are often hesitant to come and live in regional destinations as they often think of these locations as remote and isolated.

Lack of employment opportunities in regional locations often proves to be the biggest barrier

Lack of reliable and affordable public transport within regional towns so students can easily travel to and from the campus

More affordable and faster transport facilities between capital cities and regional towns should be explored

### **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?**

Metropolitan and Regional Universities should actively look at creating and offering joint programs for international students. This could also address some student concerns about ranking of regional institutes.

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

Existing international students in regional campuses can prove to be great ambassadors for prospective international students and their families by sharing personal experiences. Once the students have adjusted to their environment in regional Australia (by finding suitable employment and accommodation) they really appreciate the chance of experiencing Australian culture and interactions with local communities.

### **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?**

Government should focus on developing and promoting the areas with regional university presence as tourist destinations.

**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)?**

Migration incentives could play an important role. In addition to this, lower more affordable fee structure or scholarships for international students choosing to study in regional Australia can also play a vital role in attracting more numbers. Government should support the regional educational institutes by providing some partial funding to subsidise fees for international students.

**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?**

This can be beneficial however the regional universities may already have some insights in these areas.

**Question 8. Any other comments?**

Having more students in regional institutions can be beneficial for the wider community especially as it can also open doors for more economic growth and can help to tackle the massive urbanisation in metropolitan cities.