



Study locations of international students across Australia in 2016

In 2016, just over nine per cent of onshore international student enrolments in Australian institutions were based in regional Australia¹. Queensland had the highest proportion of its total international student enrolments in regional campuses, with almost a third (32%) of students studying outside of its capital city. This was followed by New South Wales, with six per cent of the state's international student enrolments outside of its capital city (Table 1).

The majority (84%) of international student enrolments in regional campuses across Australia were in the ten regions shown in Table 2. Students were predominantly based in large regional cities where education campuses are based. For example, only six of the 2,188 students in the Northern Territory were studying outside of Darwin.

Nationality

China and India were the top two source countries for regional enrolment. Together, these countries contributed over 30 per cent of the total regional enrolments, although less than 10 per cent of all student enrolments from these countries were in regional areas. In contrast, over a quarter (26%) of total enrolment of students from the USA were in regional areas, making it one of the top 5 source countries for regional enrolment, even though it was the 16th largest source country for all national enrolments in 2016.

Sector, Level of Study and Field of Education

Chart 1 shows that international student enrolments in regional areas were more likely to be in higher education, followed by VET, ELICOS, non-award and schools. Nearly half (47%) of students studying in regional areas were enrolled in higher education courses.

Bachelor or masters (by coursework) degree were the most popular level of study for higher education students in both regional and metropolitan areas. However, 12 per cent of enrolments in regional areas were in postgraduate research, compared with 6 per cent in metropolitan areas. Higher education students in regional areas slightly favour studying in STEM² fields (32% of all enrolments), compared to those in metropolitan areas (27% of all enrolments).

How international education contributes to regional communities

It has been estimated that onshore international students studying and living in the New South Wales region of New England and the North West contributed \$33 million to the local economy and supported 243 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs in 2014-15. More recently, it was estimated that students in Cairns (Queensland) contributed \$36 million to the region, which supported 273 FTE jobs. In addition, regional economies also benefit indirectly from international students in metropolitan areas via supply chains. For example, spending by international students in Melbourne was estimated to contribute \$888 million to regional Victoria³ and supported 5,478 FTE jobs there.

Table 1. Distribution of international student enrolments in Australian capital and regional areas in 2016

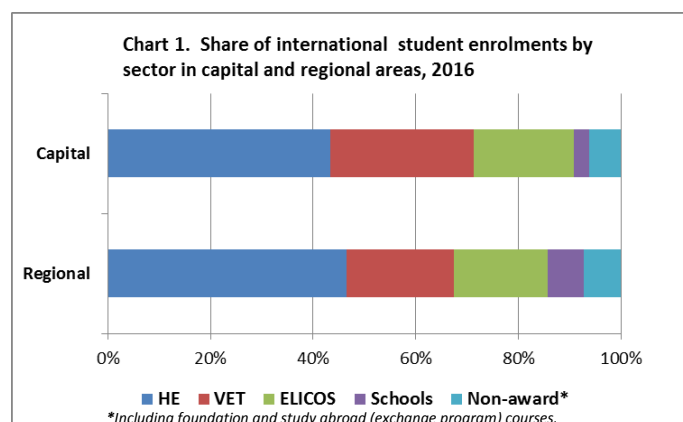
State / Territory	Share (%)		Enrolments		Total
	Capital area*	Regional area	Capital area*	Regional area	
NSW	93.7%	6.3%	244,882	16,462	261,344
VIC	97.6%	2.4%	209,146	5,102	214,248
QLD	67.6%	32.4%	74,071	35,483	109,554
SA	99.8%	0.2%	33,400	58	33,458
WA	99.5%	0.5%	54,372	268	54,640
TAS	0.0%	100.0%	0	5,819	5,819
NT	0.0%	100.0%	0	2,188	2,188
ACT	100.0%	0.0%	14,439	0	14,439
Australia	90.6%	9.4%	630,310	65,380	695,690

*Capital areas include capital cities in each state and territory, with the exception of Hobart (TAS) and Darwin (NT).

Table 2. Top ten regions for international student enrolments in regional areas in 2016

State / Territory	Location	Enrolments	Share (%)
QLD	Gold Coast	22,044	33.7%
NSW	Illawarra	7,885	12.1%
NSW	Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	5,436	8.3%
TAS	Hobart	4,385	6.7%
QLD	Sunshine Coast	3,595	5.5%
QLD	Cairns	2,647	4.0%
VIC	Geelong	2,492	3.8%
QLD	Logan - Beaudesert	2,210	3.4%
NT	Darwin	2,182	3.3%
QLD	Toowoomba	2,007	3.1%
Other	Other locations	10,497	16.1%
Total		65,380	100.0%

Regional areas as derived from the ABS (ASGS) remoteness classification.



¹ The Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), which is also used for the national census categorised the whole of Tasmania and the Northern Territory as regional areas. For the purpose of this Research Snapshot, the whole of the ACT is defined as not regional.

² Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; incorporating the broad fields Natural Physical Sciences, Agriculture and Environmental Studies, Information Technology and Engineering.

³ Deloitte Access Economics (2016). The Value of International Education to Australia available at <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/research-papers/Documents/ValueInternationalEd.pdf>.