



## International students studying in regional areas

In 2019, three per cent of onshore international student enrolments were in regional areas of Australia<sup>1</sup> (Table 1). Total enrolments in regional areas grew by 18% on 2018, with the largest growth in Hobart (38%) followed by Ballarat (33%) as shown in Table 2. All enrolments in Tasmania and the Northern Territory are considered regional, otherwise Queensland had the highest regional proportion (5%) (Table 1).

More than half (51%) of international student enrolments in regional campuses across Australia were predominantly in large regional centres where education campuses are present such as Hobart and Darwin.

### Nationality

China (22%) and India (17%) were the top two source countries for regional enrolments followed by Nepal (9%). China and India together contributed over a third (39%) of all regional enrolments, although just three and four per cent of all student enrolments from each country respectively were in regional areas. In comparison, seven per cent of enrolments from the USA were in regional areas. The USA had the highest proportion of regional enrolments out of the top ten nationalities found in regional areas.

### Sector, Level of Study and Field of Education

Almost half (49%) of students studying in regional areas were enrolled in higher education followed by VET (34%), ELICOS (9%), schools (6%) and non-award (3%) (Figure 1). Bachelor Degree/Honours and Masters (by coursework) were the most popular levels of study for higher education students in both regional (88%) and metropolitan areas (94%). Postgraduate research made up eleven per cent of enrolments in regional areas, compared with five per cent in metropolitan areas. Higher education students in regional areas were more likely to be studying STEM<sup>2</sup> fields (43%) than those in metropolitan areas (33%) where Management and Commerce dominated (40%).

### Data limitations

Note that in 2019 a total of 956,773 enrolments were reported<sup>3</sup>, but some (less than 30,000) lacked correct geocoding and so are not counted here. It is also the case that enrolments in government schools in NSW and Victoria are collectively reported against each government's education department and geocoded to its head office, in central Sydney and Melbourne respectively. For this reason, international school students in regional areas are underrepresented in this data.

**Table 1. International student enrolments by location in 2019**

State / Territory	Share		Enrolments		Total
	*Major Cities	Regional area	*Major Cities	Regional area	
NSW	99%	1%	354,913	3,635	358,548
VIC	99%	1%	296,996	2,667	299,663
QLD	95%	5%	130,430	7,250	137,680
WA	99%	1%	52,307	344	52,651
SA	100%		42,632	112	42,744
ACT	100%		18,640		18,640
TAS		100%		14,447	14,447
NT		100%		3,038	3,038
<b>Australia</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>895,918</b>	<b>31,493</b>	<b>927,411</b>

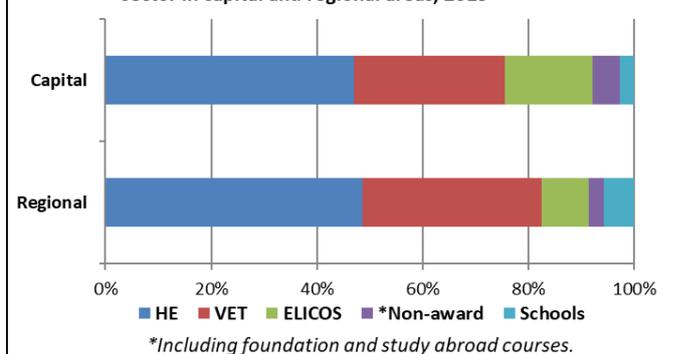
\*Major Cities include all capital cities except Hobart and Darwin. Other large cities such as the Gold Coast and Newcastle are included in Major Cities.

**Table 2. Top six regional centres for international student enrolments in 2019**

State / Territory	**Regional centres	2018	2019	Share	Growth on 2018
TAS	Hobart	9,401	12,933	41%	38%
NT	Darwin	2,689	3,031	10%	13%
QLD	Cairns	2,474	2,608	8%	5%
QLD	Toowoomba	2,038	2,037	6%	0%
QLD	Townsville	1,842	1,939	6%	5%
VIC	Ballarat	1,216	1,620	5%	33%
	Other locations	7,073	7,325	23%	4%
<b>Total enrolments in regional areas</b>		<b>26,733</b>	<b>31,493</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18%</b>

\*\*SA4 regions as derived from the ABS' ASGS

**Figure 1. Share of international student enrolments by sector in capital and regional areas, 2019**



<sup>1</sup> Regional for the purpose of this research snapshot includes all non-Major Cities as defined in the [Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\)](#). International student enrolments not coded to the ASGS are not included in total counts in this research snapshot.

<sup>2</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; incorporating the broad fields Natural and Physical Sciences, Agriculture, Environmental and related studies Studies, Information Technology and Engineering and related Technologies.

<sup>3</sup> Monthly summary of International Student enrolment data available at the department's [website](#).