More Opportunities for Regional Students: a guaranteed place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from regional Australia

Overview
The Australian Government will introduce demand driven funding to support all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from regional and remote communities to go to university.

In 2021, an additional 160 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from regional and remote areas will benefit from a guaranteed a Commonwealth supported place at a university of their choice, where they are accepted by the university into the course of study. This number will rise to over 1,700 students by 2024.

The National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy (Napthine Review) highlighted the increased challenges and very low higher education participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in regional and remote areas. Introducing demand driven funding for these students responds to Recommendation 5 of the Napthine Review.

Demand-driven funding for these students will have flow-on benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including in remote locations, by increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university graduates in the workforce.

What does this policy mean for students?
All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who live in regional and remote Australia are guaranteed a Commonwealth supported place at a university of their choice, where they are accepted by the university into their chosen course of study. An eligible university place is a non-designated, bachelor level course at an Australian public university.
Frequently asked questions: students

I am an Indigenous student from a regional or remote area. Am I guaranteed a university place?
No. Each university and each course has its own entry requirements you need to meet to be admitted. To find out more about entry requirements please see the Course Seeker website.

Do Indigenous students need to enrol at a regional or remote campus to be eligible for a demand driven place?
No. Demand driven Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) are available to all Indigenous students with a first enrolment address in a regional or remote location, regardless of whether they choose to study at a regional or metropolitan institution.

How much funding will students receive under this measure?
This measure will not provide funding directly to students. It will provide a Commonwealth subsidy to universities for every Indigenous student from a regional or remote area enrolled in a bachelor level course.

Eligible students will still need to pay a student contribution amount towards the cost of their tuition. The amount of the student contribution will vary depending on the course. Students are able to defer the cost of tuition under the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) until their taxable income reaches a certain level at which repayments commence.

Frequently asked questions: providers

When will demand driven funding for regional and remote Indigenous students commence?
The measure will commence on 1 January 2021.

Which higher education providers are eligible to receive demand driven funding for regional and remote Indigenous students?
All higher education providers listed in Table A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 are eligible to receive demand driven funding for regional and remote Indigenous students.

What courses are covered by this measure?
Demand driven Commonwealth subsidies are available for bachelor level courses.

How will this measure work?
From 2021, a new and separate component will be established within the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS), creating demand driven funding for Indigenous students from regional and remote areas, whether they study at a regional or metropolitan institution. The new component will follow CGS guidelines regarding cluster rates, eligible courses and eligible providers.
A university will receive CGS funding for all enrolled Indigenous students from regional and remote areas. Funding for other students (including Indigenous students from metropolitan areas) will remain part of a university's capped, non-designated Maximum Basic Grant Amount, as per current arrangements.

**Is there a cap on the amount of funding available under this measure?**
No. This measure is demand driven. Funding will be available for all additional regional and remote Indigenous students that universities enrol in undergraduate courses from 2021.

**Are continuing regional and remote Indigenous students covered by this measure?**
Existing Indigenous students from regional and remote areas will be moved to the new program. Universities will not receive any additional funding for these students.

**Will demand driven funding for regional and remote Indigenous students be evaluated?**
The measure will be ongoing, but will be reviewed after three years to evaluate its impact on the higher education outcomes of Indigenous students from regional and remote Australia.