

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 3 - Higher Education

DEEWR Question No. EW0073_11

Senator Macdonald provided in writing.

Question

HIGHER EDUCATION - REMOTE AUSTRALIA

What is the definition of Remote Australia for the purposes of Education?

Answer

There is no single definition of remote Australia for all education purposes. There is a range of different definitions depending on the needs of a particular program or circumstance.

Definitions

Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) was developed in 1997 by the then Department of Health and Aged Care. ARIA is based on work by the National Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems. It is a geographic measure of remoteness based on road distances between where people live and the places or Service Centres those people travel to for access to goods and services and to enjoy opportunities for social interaction.

ARIA+ is the most current version of the ARIA.

Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) remoteness measure, is based on the present version of the ARIA (latest version ARIA+).

Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training

The ARIA+ definition outlined above is used for higher education student data collection, the vocational education and training data collections definitions of 'remote' and 'very remote' and for VET student residential addresses and apprentices' employer and workplace locations.

Income support

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) is used for determining the remoteness of a student's family home for the purposes of the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Income Support for Students) Act 2010*.

Schools

Three different definitions of 'remoteness' are used for schools programs and policy. In part this is because of emerging demographic and statistical instruments, revisions and the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs decisions. For the purposes of the Country Areas Program (CAP), a variation of the

ARIA called 'Remoteness Areas' is used in a highly specific way. On advice from ABS, which formulated Remoteness Areas, 2006 Census data is used to calculate a demographic index which determines the funding for CAP proportionally: so that each non-government sector school receives an amount of the total CAP funding in line with its proportion of students in rural schools as per ABS calculations.