

Educational disadvantage and regional and rural schools

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Abstract

While there is much to be valued in regional and rural education, studies in Australia have identified location and isolation as key dimensions of additional need in the provision and delivery of education. Forty years ago, in the report to the Australian Schools Commission, Karmel identified several aspects of educational disadvantage experienced by schools in country areas – including high teacher turnover, low retention rates, less confidence in the benefits of education, limited cultural facilities in the community, lack of employment opportunities for school completers, and a less relevant curriculum – that led to lower levels of attainment (Karmel, 1973). These issues are still relevant today. This study uses a range of indicators, including NAPLAN results, attainment, post-school transition and student engagement and well-being data, to set out some of the dimensions of rural and urban differences in schooling. Results show that some, but not all, of the challenges facing regional and rural schools arise from the social, economic and community differences between city and rural environments.