



## Information Sheet 2

### Giftedness in regional/rural/remote settings

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Within Australia, a majority of the research that is conducted on giftedness relates to metropolitan settings, yet giftedness is not contextually bound and can be found within even the most remote locations. Much of the research suggests that while there are some specific challenges associated with being gifted and growing up and being educated in rural and remote environments, these are not insurmountable. Shifting from a deficit focus to one of capitalising on the strengths of rural and regional communities has started to underpin recent Australian research, which is a welcome direction.

My own work in the area of rural giftedness began with a Masters of Education research study investigating teachers in regional Victoria and how they catered for giftedness in their classrooms. Findings from the study were published as an article: Plunkett, M. (2002). **Impacting on teacher attitudes toward gifted students** in Vialle, W. & Geake, J. (Eds). *The Gifted Enigma*. Australia: Hawker Brownlow.

This was followed by my 2006 PhD study (**Tales from the Pond: Perceptions of grouped and mainstream rural students regarding their distinctive learning environments**) examining the introduction of a *Like Minds* ability grouping strategy in a regional secondary college. The findings supported ability grouping as having a positive influence on self-efficacy, motivation, socialisation and achievement and as a strategy that worked well for regional schools with limited resources to devote to their high ability learners.

My work has also resulted in a number of presentations and publications including;

- A keynote presentation at the 2015 Gifted Futures Forum for Talent Enhancement at the University of New South Wales, titled **A Tripartite Overview of Giftedness in a Rural Context**.
- A book chapter in 2012 titled **Justice for rural gifted students**, in S. Nikakis (Ed). *Let the tall poppies flourish: advocating to achieve educational justice for all gifted students* (pp. 37-49). Australia: Heidelberg Press.
- A book chapter that is to be published later this year titled **Gifted Students in Rural and Remote settings**, in J. Jolly and J. Jarvis (Eds.). *Exploring Gifted Education: Australian and New Zealand Perspectives*. UK: Routledge
- A journal article in 2009 titled **Re-conceptualizing ability grouping within a social justice framework: A student perspective**. *Australasian Journal of Gifted Education*, 18(2), 5-16.

There has also been some excellent work recently published on rural giftedness from Wood and Zundans-Fraser (2013) and Bannister, Cornish, Bannister-Tyrell, and Gregory (2015).

Research relating specifically to giftedness from an Indigenous perspective, which for the most part is rurally based, has also been particularly informative, especially the following; Chaffey, 2002; Chaffey, Bailey & Vine, 2003; Christie, 2011; Clark & Merrotsy, 2008; Cronin & Diezmann, 2002; Garvis, 2006; Gibson & Vialle, 2007.

It does need to be acknowledged that in general, within Australia, there has been a major dearth of state and federal provisioning for rural giftedness, despite rurality being recognised as a challenge. For example, in the 2012 Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the education of gifted and talented children, many references were made to the challenges associated with location, however, this did not translate into any real emphasis on this aspect in the recommendations.