



Tool 07:

Education and Training

07

Education and training organisations in remote Australia summary sheet

Guide to engaging an RTO in remote Australia

Researching, selecting, and working with an RTO can be complex when delivering training in remote and very remote communities. Figure 1 provides an outline of the steps required to engage an RTO, with some additional considerations in remote communities.

Figure 1. Steps required to engage an RTO

Step	Remote perspective
Step 1 – write a brief background information	Important not to 'settle' for inappropriate RTOs, based on your location, but may have to be some compromises.
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Step 2 – Research courses and the RTO itself	Once community requirements are understood, determine which RTOs can offer courses reflecting those needs e.g. aged care certificates
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Step 3 – Create a shortlist of RTOs	This may be particularly short once geography and remoteness is considered.
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Step 4 – Interview and assess	Assessed against ability to: → Provide required qualification → Deliver to small groups in remote localities → Consider recognition of prior learning (RPL) → Have available trainers → Travel to remote locations → Deliver training in a culturally safe manner.
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Step 5 – Assess the benefits/ challenges and create options list	Onerous when working remotely but try to have at least one face-to-face meeting.
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Step 6 – Clarify the rules of engagement – timelines, roles etc.	Difficult to find RTOs who can cater for Indigenous members of the community.
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Step 7 – Regular review –including of Step 1	Fortnightly meetings with proposed RTO and other stakeholders (Community Development Program, employers, funder, community representatives) to ensure scope, budgets and timeframes were met.

National guide to vocational training and funding

The Australian Government provides a searchable database of current RTOs at www.yourcareer.gov.au/learn-and-train/training-providers?locationCode=509. There is also a national site for information on options for Commonwealth financial assistance at www.dewr.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training.

Education and training organisations in remote Australia

This section of the Toolkit provides a step-by-step guide to engaging an RTO. Each of the steps includes contextual and experiential information, which demonstrates the unique nature of engaging an RTO in remote and very remote communities.

This section also includes a simple list of available vocational training options and funding opportunities throughout Australia. This list is by no means definitive but more a starting point for other project teams. The Project Team suggests caution since websites and links can change over time – however, those provided in this document were current at the time of writing of this publication.

Finally, this section describes the unique issues that were experienced by the Project Team in securing an RTO in a remote community.

Guide to engaging an RTO in remote Australia

Engaging an RTO is usually straightforward – but doing so in remote and very remote communities comes with its own set of barriers. An excellent step-by-step guide to Vocational Education and Training (VET) already exists and is available from the HSSO.

For this Toolkit, the Project Team have instead developed a step-by-step guide (Figure 1) that follows the information provided by the HSSO. However, it provides a remote and very remote project perspective, as experienced by the Project Team.¹

Figure 1. The Project step-by-step guide to securing an RTO

Step	Remote perspective
Step 1 – Write a brief → Background information. → What you need for your organisation. → Think big picture and both short and long term. → Consider your workforce challenges and goals.	→ It is very important in remote and very remote areas as it is difficult to find RTOs, but you don't want to settle for something that turns out to be inappropriate for your organisation or setting. → There may not be a lot of choice, but some things should not be compromised on. → Ensure that you have consulted with community members to correctly match the brief to what they want and what they will be willing to participate in.
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Step 2 – Research courses and the RTO itself → Look online. → How long have they been an RTO? → Who is their governing organisation? → Do they have any regulatory restrictions imposed on them?	→ Ensure the RTO has capacity and an understanding of the requirements of providing services to very remote areas and are willing to support the learning progress of participants in the community.
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Step 3 – Create a shortlist of RTOs → It is important to match the offering to your brief from Step 1. → Using the following criteria, create a shortlist of RTOs that may be suitable: — Preparedness to travel onsite — Cost — Qualifications of trainers — Ongoing support and follow-up for students — Methods of course delivery — RPL options — How do they contextualise their courses? — How prepared are they to customise both the course and their mode of delivery?	→ In remote communities this list is often very short as finding suitable RTOs who are prepared to match their course to the community's needs can be difficult, but it is important to persevere.

Step	Remote perspective
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Step 4 – Interview and assess → Interview the RTO as you would an applicant for a job interview. → Use the information and questions from Steps 1, 2 and 3 to create your interview questions.	→ Request that the RTO describes how they will ensure financial viability for the duration of the course e.g. will they be seeking funding to proceed?
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Step 5 – Assess the benefits and challenges → For each of the RTO's you have looked at and interviewed, create a benefits and challenges list. → If you haven't already done so at the interview, explore the options with them – what can and can't be changed.	→ This step will involve more work and is particularly onerous when working remotely, but it is worth it in the long run. → If you haven't already done so, maybe visit the RTO and meet face-to-face.
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Step 6 – Clarify the rules of engagement → Ensure the following aspects are clarified and documented with your selected RTO: – Timelines and details of the training – Roles and responsibilities of all parties – How you will communicate – How any conflict will be resolved. → Finally, document and sign a formal agreement. You may choose to use: – A service agreement template that your organisation currently uses. – An agreement template provided by the RTO.	→ Difficult to find RTOs who can cater for Indigenous Australian members of the community: – Police check and identification requirements – Caring for family members – Lack of childcare – Implications of sorry business – Requirements to travel off country
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Step 7 – Regular review → Regularly review the arrangements with your RTO, looking at: – Trainer skills and currency – Quality of resources – Whether the training continues to meet your needs – refer back to Step 1. Note: if your needs change, review and change your brief.	→ In the context of the Project this has yet to occur but is an important reminder to ensure the RTO continues with its initial contact and responsibilities. Things can change with the brief,

Guide to vocational training and funding

This guide is designed to help users navigate the available vocational training options and funding opportunities throughout Australia and includes an existing database of all registered training organisations.

National RTOs database

The Australian Government provides a searchable database of RTOs. You can find RTOs by state, region, or qualification at www.yourcareer.gov.au/learn-and-train/training-providers?locationCode=509.

Government vocational training funding opportunities by state and territory

Figure 2 lists sites available for vocational training funding across Australian states and territories.

Figure 2. Vocational training funding opportunities in Australia – national, state and territory, as of June 2025

State or territory	Name	Link	Description
National	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations – Training Costs	www.dewr.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training	Provides information regarding options for Commonwealth financial assistance.
ACT	ACT Government – Skills Grants	www.act.gov.au/skills/grants	Provides information and links to Skills Canberra grant opportunities.
NSW	NSW Government Vocational Funding Overview	www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/vocational/funding	Provides information on how to access funding for VET courses for high-demand industries.
	NSW Government Smart and Skilled	www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au	Provides information and search option for Skills NSW training courses, including any available fee-free options.
NT	Industry Skills Advisory Council NT – Funding	www.isacnt.org.au/funding	Provides information on grant and funding opportunities for training in NT.
QLD	Grow Your Own Workforce – Training Funding	www.gyoworkforce.com.au/funding-for-training	Provides information and search option for vocational training options, including fee-free options and Certificate 3 Guarantee.
	Qld Government Department of Trade, Employment and Training	www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training	Provides information on employment and training, including training subsidies and fee-free options, via the Training/Training and careers option.
SA	SA Government Skilling SA	www.courses.com.au/government-funding/skilling-sa	Provides SA students with information on subsidised qualifications, based on your employment and training level.
TAS	Tas Government Skills Tas – Funding	www.skills.tas.gov.au/funding	Provides links to funding programs through the Skills Tasmania funding opportunities and grants.
VIC	Vic Government Skills First Funding Eligibility Check	www.vic.gov.au/check-your-eligibility-for-skills-first-funding	A funding program that provides students with access to government-subsidised training courses in growth industries.
	Vic Government Free Technical and Further Education (TAFE)	www.vic.gov.au/free-tafe	Provides information on free TAFE courses available in Victoria.
	WA Government – Jobs and Skills	www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au	Provides information on fee-free and low fee training opportunities in priority industry areas.

Case study – the Menindee example

The Remote Accord Project Team attempted to follow an agreed process when researching and securing an RTO. However, this did not necessarily go to plan. As with many aspects of working with remote and very remote communities, the issues and barriers were complex and varied.

After consulting with approximately 11 different RTOs, the Project Team selected a provider^a based on several key factors:

- **Regional understanding and support** – *As a regional provider, the chosen provider demonstrates a clear understanding of the challenges posed by geographic isolation and the support mechanisms required to address them effectively.*
- **Experience with migrant students** – *The chosen provider has a strong track record of working with migrant students relocating to Australia. The organisation offers a comprehensive support system that includes academic tutoring, pastoral care, cultural training, and proactive measures to ensure individual cultural safety during the transition to a new country and culture.*
- **Flexible workforce** – *The chosen provider maintains a flexible staffing model, allowing the organisation to scale resources up or down as needed throughout the life of the Project.*
- **Self-awareness and capability** – *The chosen provider demonstrates a realistic understanding of its capabilities and limitations, which supports more effective planning and execution.*
- **Tailored training delivery** – *The chosen provider expressed a strong willingness to collaborate on creating a tailored and viable training pathway for small student cohorts in remote and very remote areas.*
- **Transparency and communication** – *From the outset, the Directors of the chosen provider were transparent in all communications, including financial considerations – an important factor in the decision-making process.*

^a The provider that was engaged has been de-identified, at their request.

References

1. Human Services Skills Organisation (HSSO). Building a Skilled Workforce: A guide to VET for Human Services Employers. <https://hssso.org.au/workforce-development-initiatives/project/building-a-skilled-workforce-a-guide-to-vet-for-human-services-employers/>. Published 2022. Accessed 13/05/2025.