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Indigenous students moving town or dropping out of school? Using cross-sectoral data on student mobility within community catchments to rethink some key performance indicators for Indigenous education in NSW

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Abstract

Indigenous students are mobile in terms of sectoral loyalty and geographical movement. Preliminary research for the NSW Government's Review of Aboriginal Education suggests that geographical allegiances of the indigenous traveller can be mapped to identify community catchments of indigenous students, which include geographical areas that are not always contiguous. The Catholic Education Commission, NSW argues that attendance and retention should not be considered just in terms of a particular school, but in the context of all schools and TAFE colleges within a town or local area, and within community catchments in which a particular group of indigenous students move (for example, from Kempsey (coast) to Bourke (inland)). Improved mapping of student mobility can assist educators and government in giving a more refined measure of these key performance indicators, and assist in developing educational strategies. This paper will report on methodology, data sharing and our results to-date, and will discuss methodological implications and opportunities for future demographic and educational analysis and forecasting.

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