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REGIONAL VOICE MISSING ON ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) commends the Government for establishing the Australian Universities Accord Implementation Advisory Committee.

Alec Webb, Executive Director of RUN, said the Committee will undertake crucial engagement with the sector to inform the legislative design of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) and the new Managed Growth Funding System, including Needs-Based funding, however RUN has serious reservations about the lack of a dedicated regional representative on the Implementation Advisory Committee.

“While RUN welcomes the establishment of the Committee and will work productively with it on its crucial mission, it is a missed opportunity for the Committee to not have a dedicated regional representative.

“This Committee will have a pivotal role in ensuring the shape of the national university landscape over coming decades.

“The Accord itself recognised that the regions host the highest concentrations of underrepresented student cohorts in the nation, and it clearly articulated the national interest aspect of attracting more regional students into university.

“Indeed, an entire chapter of the Accord was dedicated to the removal of barriers for regional students attending university, yet the composition of the Committee does not seem to reflect the same priority and urgency of regional engagement as that articulated by the Accord.

“It will be vital to have a well-designed ATEC, managed growth funding and needs based funding system to meet the regional attainment and equity targets set out in the Accord.

“Regional universities are currently doing the lion’s share of work in educating traditionally underrepresented student cohorts and will continue to do so.

“Indeed, it would be impossible for the Accord’s equity targets to be met without strong and prosperous regional universities, and the lived experience of regional universities should be represented on the Committee to advise Accord implementation,” said Mr Webb.

RUN will proactively engage with the Implementation Advisory Committee and will continue to advocate for regional university expertise to be represented on the Committee.

RUN calls on the Minister for Education to include a dedicated regional representative on the Implementation Advisory Committee.

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