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RUN ASSISTS DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

RUN's universities continue to provide increasing support for low socio-economic background students, according to results released by the Federal Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research on 23 April.

The acting Chair of RUN, Professor Peter Lee, said that most of RUN's universities had shown a significant increase in the percentage of students enrolled from disadvantaged backgrounds from 2009 to 2012.

"The increase has come despite increasing competition from many metropolitan universities for low SES students," Professor Lee said.

"Regional universities have higher concentrations of 'first generation to university' students and low SES students than metropolitan universities.

"RUN's universities teach 16% of all the low SES students enrolled at Australian universities. Many students choose not to travel, or cannot travel to capital cities for university education.

"While the government has recognised the increased costs associated with teaching students who may not have been well prepared for university through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program and performance funding, it is important that the level of support is adequate for the task.

"Our universities continue to provide additional targeted programs and services to support the success of disadvantaged students.

"Regional universities play a key role in improving the economic, social, cultural and environmental well being of communities. Fully utilising the potential of a region's resources including its people is an important part of this," Professor Lee said.

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