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RUN WELCOMES REGIONAL FOCUS IN PRIME MINISTER'S MANUFACTURING TASKFORCE

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) has welcomed the recognition of the importance of manufacturing in regional Australia, as emphasised in the 16 August report of the non-government members of the Prime Minister's Manufacturing Taskforce.

The Chair of RUN, Professor David Battersby, said that the report highlights the need to grow the economy through the diversification of industry, including in the regions, and also provides recommendations to boost the industry.

"The report emphasises that our manufacturing capability should be broadened, including in upstream processing that capitalises on our strengths in extractive, forestry and agriculture industries and in niche areas of knowledge-intensive manufacturing," Professor Battersby said.

"Targeted stimulus is recommended, as is better collaboration between researchers and business, and the development of innovation hubs, based on niche specialisations, including in major regional centres.

"Regional universities have a key role to play in any strategy to diversify manufacturing in the regions. They are well placed to develop their links with local industries, including mining, agriculture, and service industries and encourage the uptake of research by business."

The report also recommends that a research impact measure tied to funding be developed. "RUN supports a research impact measure developed in consultation with the sector," Professor Battersby said.

"Manufacturing is important to regional development. Regional universities should be central in any strategy to diversify manufacturing in the regions."

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