

**2 APRIL 2013**

## **RUN OFFERS INPUT IN COALITION HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**

The Regional Universities Network has provided a submission to the Coalition's Online Higher Education Working Group to examine how Australia can capitalise on the potential of online learning.

RUN Chair Professor David Battersby said the group's six universities used online course delivery in a variety of ways. Some were world leaders in distance education and had decades of experience in the delivery of online learning and distance education. Others serviced the needs of their communities primarily through face-to-face learning.

"'Online education' is a diverse and complex catch-all term that encompasses a wide range of activities, pedagogies and technologies," Professor Battersby said.

"While it represents a significant opportunity for growth and will become increasingly important in the future, there isn't a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to delivering higher education. Online learning is one part of a complex range of delivery methods which are needed to successfully engage a wide range of students in an age of mass higher education.

"The challenge for RUN universities is to build on their traditional strengths in online provision, to respond to rapidly evolving consumer demands and technological developments, and to deliver an educational experience of the highest quality. RUN universities are already taking the initiative to respond to these challenges."

Professor Battersby said the provision of high quality online education was not an inexpensive option. Online programs needed to be underpinned by ongoing support for the development of courseware and IP. The cost of developing online subjects was estimated to be a minimum of about \$20,000-\$30,000 per subject. Therefore, for a range of subjects (e.g. 300), the cost was in the order of \$6-9 million. Course material needed to be renewed at least every 4-5 years.

The submission is on the RUN website at: <https://run.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/RUN-Submission-to-the-Coalition-Online-HEGW.pdf>

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