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RUN WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT OF EQUITY FUNDING

Funding of \$86.5 million under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program will go some way to helping regional students attend university, according to the Regional Universities Network.

RUN Chair Professor David Battersby welcomed the funding announcement yesterday (April 30) by the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, The Hon Sharon Bird MP.

Professor David Battersby said the funding would help lift higher education participation in regional Australia.

"RUN is pleased that the Government has committed to continued funding under this program. It will provide further support for outreach activities from universities to schools to help lift the aspiration of students to attend university. It will also help universities support students who are less well prepared for higher education to successfully complete degrees," Professor Battersby said.

"Regional Australia has relatively low levels of higher education attainment, and higher education at regional universities transforms lives. Many of RUN's students are from low socio-economic status backgrounds and are not well prepared for university.

"In regional Australia 12 per cent of people have a degree compared to more than double that in capitals. We need to lift participation in higher education in regional Australia to address this imbalance and the equity funding is an important part of this.

"Funding received by regional universities under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program will help RUN deliver higher education to students from diverse backgrounds aspire to and successfully complete university degrees.

"Given the significant cuts to the Government's expenditure on higher education over the last year, RUN calls on the Government to now indicate that the sector will be spared from further cuts in the budget," Professor Battersby said.

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