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REGIONAL UNIVERISITES NETWORK KEEN TO SEE RED TAPE REDUCTIONS

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) welcomes the great potential benefits from an independent review of university red tape and immediate reductions in demands for data, but cautions against the potential risks of a two-tiered regulatory system which unnecessarily burdens regional universities.

The Federal Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research Craig Emerson and the Minister for Higher Education Sharon Bird today (May 29) jointly announced the regulatory review and immediate action to simplify data collection and administrative requirements.

RUN Chair Professor David Battersby said a high quality and streamlined regulatory approach was vital for the higher education sector.

"It is costly and time-consuming for universities to respond to detailed requests for information from Government. It will be of great benefit to regional universities, and the sector more broadly, if, as a result of this review, a more streamlined approach is adopted by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education," Professor Battersby said.

"We also welcome the immediate steps the Government has announced to reduce red tape, particularly with respect to data collection by the Department.

"While regulatory necessity, reflecting risk and proportionate regulation are fundamental elements of TEQSA's approach, it is important that, in any reforms, the Government doesn't establish a two-tiered system of regulation that unnecessarily burdens regional universities.

"Any reduction of unnecessary red tape will ease the burden on regional universities and enable us to focus on our core mission – teaching and learning, research, and community engagement to contribute to the educational opportunities, economic prospects and community capabilities for the third of Australians who live outside capital cities," Professor Battersby said.

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