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## **UNIVERSITY - INDUSTRY RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT KEY TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In its submission to the Government's Review of Research Funding and Policy Arrangements, the Regional Universities Network (RUN) has indicated that it is essential for regional universities to be adequately funded for research engagement with industry to drive regional development in the national interest.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Jan Thomas, said that regional Australia, where a third of the Australian population resides, needs more highly trained professionals, innovative research and engagement between universities and industry to support strategic and national priorities.

"Any further concentration of research funding in a few, metropolitan universities would prevent the growth of research in regional Australia which services the needs of business and the general community. If regional universities are funded to engage with regional business we will in turn use our expertise and broker others for the benefit of our communities and the nation," Professor Thomas said.

"It is important that the scope of programs and incentives available to encourage partnerships between universities and industry recognises the mix of business in regional Australia, including small to medium enterprises, cooperatives, and entities delivering regional services.

"We also advocate for strategic, regional committees, modelled on the English Local Enterprise Partnerships, to bring industry and universities together to foster collaboration. "More needs to be done to encourage industry-focussed research training. We support establishing a new program of industry PhD scholarships, focussing on SMEs and non-commercial partners, to be partly funded by the Government's Research Training Scheme (RTS) and partly by partner organisations. A significant proportion of scholarships should be allocated outside capital cities to drive regional development, and industry partners should be provided with favourable taxation treatment.

"RUN also supports setting aside some funding from the Research Training Scheme to attract research students to regional Australia in areas of national priority.

"Other changes to the research block grants could include increasing funding to the Joint Research Engagement program to encourage collaboration with industry, and including an element in this scheme for research extension to enhance the uptake of new technologies," Professor Thomas said.

"Greater industry engagement should be encouraged in the Government's linkage-focussed, competitive grant programs.

[www.run.edu.au](http://www.run.edu.au)

“Fundamental research is critical and any adjustments to encourage industry collaboration and commercialisation outcomes should create an appropriate balance preserving the nation’s capability and activity to create new ideas and innovations.”

Further details are available in RUN’s submission to the review at [www.run.edu.au](http://www.run.edu.au)

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