

27 APRIL 2016

RUN SUPPORTS REGIONAL AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE PROPOSAL FOR CITY DEALS FOR SMALL CITIES

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) supports the Regional Australia Institute's (RAI) proposal for City Deals as described in its report Deal or No Deal? Bringing Small Cities into the National Economic Agenda.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Jan Thomas, said that the City Deals would help regional cities by implementing specific strategies to drive growth and outcomes such as better skills, innovation and workforce participation.

"The proposed model is based on the UK's "City Deals" concept. Agreements are negotiated with government and other key local players, including universities, to help business grow, create economic growth, and decide how public money should be spent. Regional universities would have an important role to play in the agenda," Professor Thomas said.

"4.5 million Australians live in Australia's 31 small cities. Every additional 100,000 Australians who choose small cities over big ones release an extra \$50 billion into the national economy through avoided housing and congestion costs.

"There are many advantages related to living in regional cities. These include affordability and liveability. As RAI has observed, small cities can capture the upsides of cities without too many of the downsides and can be both highly productive and great places to live. Policy around small cities needs to be flexible and able to reflect strengths, comparative advantages and enhance city specialisation.

"To enable cities to succeed and grow, they need connectivity through physical and digital infrastructure; human capital able to support a density of high paying jobs; one or more globally competitive specialisations; amenities that attract people; and a network of high capacity institutions. Regional universities are key to all these elements," Professor Thomas said.

"RUN would welcome consideration of the City Deals model in the Australian regional development context."

For media enquiries:

Dr Caroline Perkins, Executive Director, Regional Universities Network, 0408 482 736

Issued by: Diana Streak, RUN Media Adviser, 022 536 064

www.run.edu.au