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RUN WELCOMES REPORT ON THE TRANSPARENCY OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) supports the recommendations contained in the report of the Higher Education Standards Panel on the transparency of higher education student admissions.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Greg Hill, said that the report provided a balanced and well-considered response which addressed transparency, accountability, and support for students.

"Improving the transparency of admissions processes, as advocated in this report, will help students and give the public confidence in the basis on which universities accept entrants.

"The report notes that the focus on ATAR as a basis of entry into higher education can be misleading as it only accounts for a little over 30 per cent of all new higher education enrolments. Many students at RUN universities, including some school leavers, are not admitted on the basis of ATAR, but rather previous vocational or higher education study, mature age entry provisions or other provisions. It is important that students understand the opportunities to gain access to higher education on the basis of alternative pathways as well as ATARs.

"RUN supports the establishment of a national higher education admissions platform and standardised templates to provide information about admissions processes, and direct comparison of information on admissions requirements and data on previous years' admission outcomes.

"The panel advocates further research to build evidence on what factors lead to high success rates and minimise attrition rates among different types of students," Professor Hill said.

"Regional universities have a high proportion of students who come from low SES and regional backgrounds, or who are mature age or studying externally. Many of our students are first in family and have not had equitable opportunities to access higher education, and have variable levels of preparedness for university study. It is essential for regional Australia and for the nation that these students are provided with the learning environments they need to succeed. More highly skilled professionals are needed in regional Australia. We are currently undertaking a number of projects to improve student success, and the findings will help inform the debate on minimising student attrition."

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