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MATURE AGE AND PART-TIME STUDENTS NEED TIME TO COMPLETE

A new report from the Department of Education and Training, Completion Rates of Higher Education students – Cohort analysis, 2005-2014, has found that the demand driven student system has had little effect on completion rates.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Greg Hill, noted that the report had found that the type of attendance (full time or part time) and the age of a student had a greater influence on completion than a student's Australian Tertiary Admission Rank.

"Many of the students at RUN's universities are mature age and part-time and juggle multiple commitments, including work and family, around their university studies. Some may take many years to complete, including potentially dropping out, then re- engaging with their studies. Every effort must be made to help them succeed in the longer-term as the benefits of university education to individuals, the economy regions and the nation are immense," Professor Hill said.

"At a time when the world is facing disruption due to people feeling excluded from social, economic and political processes, it is more important than ever to ensure that people, including regional and mature age Australians, are given every opportunity to upskill or attain university qualifications. For many regional Australians, regional universities offer the only opportunity to attend university," Professor Hill said.

"The jobs and industries of the future will need highly skilled university graduates who can connect regional Australia with the global, innovative economy. We must recognise the challenges many face in attaining university education, and support them through their studies."

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