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SOME SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL STUDENTS IN BUDGET

The 2017 Budget higher education reforms announced on 1 May have some positive measures for regional students.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Greg Hill, welcomed the announcement that the Government will provide \$15.2 million to support the establishment of up to eight new regional study hubs.

“More study hubs in regional Australia to support external students will facilitate student success and aspiration for university study,” Professor Hill said.

“In addition, the University of the Sunshine Coast has received a concessional loan to finance the construction of the foundation facilities for a new Morton Bay university campus in Queensland.

“The Government has restated its election commitment to provide \$24 million over four years from 2017-18 to establish a Regional and Remote Enterprise Scholarship Program. This will help improve educational attainment, skills development and employment opportunities for rural and regional students studying STEM and health subjects. This welcome initiative will provide at least 1,200 scholarships.

“RUN is disappointed that the funding cut to the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program announced in last year’s budget has not been reversed. This program helps support student success and outreach activities to schools and communities.

“Other 2017 budget initiatives relevant to regional Australia include: the refocusing of the existing incubator support element of the Entrepreneurs Program to provide additional support for regional businesses; \$20 million to the La Trobe Valley under the Regional Jobs and Investment package; continued Government support for the Regional Australia Institute to the end of 2017; continued funding of Regional Development Australia Committees to 2020-21; and more support for delivery of the National Cities Agenda,” Professor Hill said.

“We look forward in future budgets to increased funding for City Deals and other place-based policies which bring together all local stakeholders in a collaborative and strategic vision for the future.”

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