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RUN: BUDGET A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION FOR REGIONAL STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITIES

Regional students and universities are the focus of the new higher education measures announced in the 2018 Budget, which include new pathway and bachelor places at regional campuses, and additional support for regional students from Youth Allowance.

In response to the findings of the Independent Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education (Halsey Review), \$96.1 million has been allocated over four years. This includes \$28.2 million in funding for around 500 additional, commencing sub-bachelor (including enabling) places annually from 2019 for institutions that operate in regional areas; and \$14 million over four years from 2018-19 to fully support an additional 185 commencing Commonwealth Supported Places from 2019, rising to 500 in 2022, for students studying in regional study hubs.

Additional funding has been provided for improved access to Youth Allowance for regional students, lifting the parental income cut-off for the regional workforce independence criterion, and giving support to around an additional 2,300 students.

The Chair of the Regional Universities Network (RUN), Professor Greg Hill, said that budget emphasis on regional higher education was well-targeted and welcome.

“Given the barriers to study at university faced by many prospective, regional students, the current number of pathway program places at regional universities is inadequate. RUN universities have around 32 per cent of the national student load in enabling courses, and more enabling and sub-bachelor places will promote student participation and success at university,” Professor Hill said.

“The budget focus on new places at regional campuses recognises the key role that regional universities play in regional employment and productivity. Seven out of 10 RUN graduates work in regional Australia, compared to the national average of two out of 10. Encouraging students to study in the regions will build regional skills and economies.

“Financial reasons are a major contributor to students not taking up university places, or dropping out of courses – the changes to Youth Allowance, combined with the new places, will help more regional Australians go to university and succeed.

“RUN looks forward to a further Government response to the Halsey review recommendations.

“We welcome the announcement that a Murray-Darling Medical Schools network will be established to support an end-to-end training continuum for students to study medicine in

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