

**29 AUGUST 2018**

## **RUN CALLS FOR ACTION FOR REGIONAL STUDENTS AND REGIONAL EDUCATION**

Building professional skills and educational attainment in the regions is key to economic growth and social and cultural cohesion.

Speaking at the AFR Higher Education Summit, members of the Regional Universities Network (RUN, called for further government response to the Independent Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education, including that regional education should be given a national focus.

“A Rural, Regional and Remote Education Commissioner should advise the government on a joined up approach to regional education and regional development,” said Dr Caroline Perkins, Executive Director, RUN.

“Enhancing access, outcomes and opportunities for regional students, implementing a National Regional Higher Education Strategy and putting education and innovation at the centre of city deals should be priorities,” said Professor Adam Shoemaker, Vice-Chancellor of Southern Cross University.

“Financial difficulties are one of the main reasons students abandon their studies, and these issues are being exacerbated by the drought. Some of the Regional and Rural Enterprise scholarships from the 2019 round should be redirected to current university students from drought-affected regions who are having financial difficulties continuing with their studies,” said Dr Perkins.

“Place-based initiatives play to the role that regional universities have in their unique settings such as La Trobe Valley and Ballarat,” said Professor Helen Bartlett, Vice-Chancellor, Federation University Australia.

“There are outstanding examples where regional universities are innovating. These include the development of successful technology parks, such as Federation University’s Technology Park at Ballarat with its work integrated learning with IBM. Seventy percent of the graduates from RUN universities work in the regions, growing regional economies, compared to 20% from other universities,” Professor Bartlett said.

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