

**12 NOVEMBER 2018**

## **REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST: RUN**

RUN congratulates the Government on the announcement by the Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, of a comprehensive range of measures and significant funding of \$134.8 million, including for new scholarships, growth of regional university campuses, and new regional study hubs, to boost higher education in regional Australia.

The Chair of the Regional Universities Network (RUN), Professor Greg Hill, said that the package acknowledges the challenges involved in addressing the very large gap between educational achievement in regional and rural Australia relative to the metropolitan capital cities.

“A one-size-fits all policy for higher education does not meet the needs of regional Australia or the nation. Place-based initiatives, such as those announced, are needed to make a difference,” Prof Hill said.

“As anchor institutions for their regions, regional universities have a pivotal role to play in addressing some of the big issues facing Australia. Encouraging young people to stay, study and work in the regions helps address national cohesion and assists in alleviating congestion in major cities. Seventy percent of the graduates from RUN universities work in regional Australia.

“In addition, regional universities are commonly the most international institutions in their communities, and facilitate international links and regional development through students, staff and alumni.

“We are delighted that the package includes the development of a National Regional, Rural and Remote Higher Education Strategy, to be led by an expert Regional Education Advisory Committee, chaired by the Hon Denis Napthine, which will form the basis for ongoing action. RUN has strongly advocated for such a strategy to advance a placed-based and joined-up approach which integrates higher education policy and programs with broader education and regional development policy.

“We are pleased that the committee will prepare a National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Report to government on priority recommendations for action, and consider the merits of establishing a Rural Education Commissioner to oversee implementation of the strategy,” Professor Hill said.

“RUN supports the proposal by Emeritus Professor John Halsey in his Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education, that an entity, such as a commissioner, should be established, that endures and provides a high and influential level of impact on the challenges and

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opportunities for regional education.

“Higher education changes lives, not only for the people directly involved, but for their families and communities,” Professor Hill said.

“RUN congratulates the Government on this initiative that demonstrates that it is listening to the voice of regional Australia in the national interest.”

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