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RUN URGES SENATE TO PASS JOB-READY GRADUATES LEGISLATION

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) urges the Senate to pass the Job-ready Graduates legislation.

In its submission to the inquiry on the Bill, RUN says that it is important for the legislation to be passed to give certainty to the sector and funding for new places in 2021.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Helen Bartlett, said that “the Job-ready Graduates legislation will also implement recommendations from the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy, and will address educational equity in regional Australia for the national good”.

“In response to issues raised by RUN, the Government has made significant changes to Job-ready Graduates which will improve the outcomes for regional students, universities and their communities. These include: lowering the student contribution for social work, mental health/behavioural science and psychology when studied as professional pathways; new arrangements for the Tertiary Access Payment to encourage regional students to study at regional universities; and providing a minimum basic grant amount for universities.

“Further, we suggest that growth in places for universities and indexation be included in a legislative instrument.

“There are still prescriptive sections in the Bill relating to the progression rate for students to access HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP. RUN questions why the legislation should need to be so prescriptive” Professor Bartlett said.

“We also suggest that the impact of the legislation is reviewed in about two years during the period of transition funding to identify and address any unintended consequences.”

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