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RUN: REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES MUST BE ELIGIBLE FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Regional universities have been largely ignored in the latest Federal Budget, with calls for much-needed regional university infrastructure going unheeded.

The chair of Regional Universities Network (RUN), Professor Nick Klomp, said that a major gap in the Federal Government budget is the lack of funding for infrastructure at regional universities.

“RUN has long argued that regional universities should be eligible for relevant infrastructure programs in the regional development portfolio, such as the Building Better Regions Fund,” Professor Klomp said.

“Regional universities are anchor institutions for their regions, and make a fundamental contribution to regional economies. Infrastructure at our universities improves research capacity, supports the engagement and partnership with regional industry, and provides broader social benefit to towns. Government should support the establishment of innovation precincts at regional university campuses.

“We welcome measures in the budget to support innovation. \$42.4 million over seven years to boost the next generation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics through industry-focussed university scholarships will encourage more women to engage with disciplines such as agriculture and engineering, which are important to the regions.

“The modification of the Research Training program funding framework to increase PhD student completion funding by approximately \$30,000 per graduate for those undertaking an industry placement will facilitate research commercialisation,” Professor Klomp said.

“We hope that a broader package to enhance regional university infrastructure will be announced in due course.”

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