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REGIONS REQUIRE AMBITIOUS RESPONSE TO SERD

Today's release of the Strategic Examination of Research and Development (SERD) presents a compelling case for major changes to the way Australia approaches its strategic research and development (R&D) capabilities.

While the report's findings provide an ambitious blueprint for Australia's future R&D system, there remains many unanswered questions about how the recommendations may be taken up by Government, and how the report may impact regional Australians and the universities they rely upon.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Universities Network (RUN), Mr Alec Webb, welcomed the report's focus on growing Australia's research infrastructure, quantifying the true cost of research, broadening and supporting Australia's research workforces, incentivising private investment, simplifying grants processes and becoming more strategic with the scale and focus of research in Australia.

"In welcoming the SERD Final Report and its range of positive recommendations, regional universities remain cautious about how many of these recommendations may be implemented.

"Regional universities remain concerned about policy levers that may lead to a further concentration of Australia's R&D capabilities towards a small handful of institutions in our largest capital cities.

"Australia's future R&D priorities identified by the SERD are primarily place-based within Australia's regions: Defence, Health, Energy and Environment, Agriculture & Food, Resources and Technology.

"Australia's regions have a front row seat to these challenges, so the existing metro-centric concentrations of Australia's research infrastructure, capabilities, activity, and research workforces must be reconfigured more towards the regions.

"How the Government intends to respond to the SERD's recommendations is not yet known, but we need to ensure that regional Australians are beneficiaries of future policy reform," said Mr Webb.

RUN acknowledges the careful work that has gone into the development of the SERD Final Report and looks forward to working with decision-makers to ensure that regional Australians benefit equally from the implementation of findings.

For media enquiries:

Alec Webb, Chief Executive Officer, 0408 482 736

Molly Tuy, Communications and Office Administration Assistant, 0493 890 747

www.run.edu.au