

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Linkages between the Universities Australia and RUN policy documents

RUN strongly endorses the UA policy document *A Smarter Australia*, which recognises the particular benefits of regional universities including that they:

- are often the focal point of their communities;
- make a substantial contribution to the local economy;
- provide a comprehensive range of courses to local people, including school leavers, mature age students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students from low SES backgrounds;
- mitigate the long-term loss of talented young people from the region;
- play a major role in regional development;
- introduce innovation and thus increased productivity to their local economy, and are the conduits of research benefitting local and regional industries and other enterprises.

RUN universities are working together to enhance their capacity and sustainability and positioning themselves for the future through greater collaboration as a network of likeminded universities. We have committed to a multi-lateral Accord which covers the spectrum of university activities.

The RUN policy document, *Smarter Regions, Smarter Australia* builds on some of the themes raised in the UA document and is complementary to it.

RUN considers that the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of Australia will be enhanced by further building human, social and cultural capital, employment, entrepreneurship, productivity and industry diversification within Australia's regions. Two-thirds to four-fifths of our graduates find work in regional Australia after graduating from our universities.

To further enhance our contribution:

- RUN seeks the development of a comprehensive new strategy, the Regional Development and Innovation initiative, that recognises the role played by regional universities in facilitating and strengthening regional economic development.

UA theme – Increasing Australians' participation at university

RUN universities are recognised for human capital development through the quality of their teaching and learning outcomes and are leaders in teaching to students with diverse needs.

To further enhance our contribution:

- RUN proposes that the value of teaching and learning should be measured by meeting agreed outcomes as a result of education.
- RUN calls for initiatives and incentives which facilitate partnerships around regional universities in teaching and learning, including in areas of national and regional need.
- RUN supports incentives to attract students, including urban students, to regional universities. This would include regional university scholarships, including dedicated scholarships for Indigenous students, and allowing HECS-HELP loans to cover regional accommodation costs making regional universities more accessible to students and increasing the pool of human capital in the regions.
- RUN calls for the development of a Regional University-Regional High School Partnership and Linkage initiative to improve the Year 12 completion rates for university-eligible students in regional communities.
- RUN supports initiatives to keep students online and accessing the internet via reliable, high speed connections.

UA theme – Expanding the global engagement of universities

RUN supports the placement of international students at regional university campuses and opportunities for regional Australian students at our universities to study overseas.

- RUN calls for incentives to enhance international student recruitment to regional universities including:
 - Providing bonus points to students towards Australian residency for attending regional campuses, particularly for those studying in areas of regional skills need;
 - Extending the work rights of international students who study in non-metropolitan locations (e.g. provision of an extra year on completion of undergraduate or postgraduate study);
 - Providing work rights to students who have completed a bachelors or masters at a regional campus regardless of the duration of study;
 - Implementation of a 21st century plan for the Asia-Pacific which would act to encourage two-way student and staff exchanges from regional Australian universities to Asia-Pacific universities.

UA theme – Supporting Australia’s research effort

RUN members are strategically engaged with research – our research attracts quality academics, builds institutional quality and capacity, is essential for the

training of research students, creates a pool of research-trained professionals, and supports and contributes to regional industries.

- RUN supports continuation of the Collaborative Research Networks program beyond 2015 to further build research capacity in our institutions and to enable them to undertake regionally relevant research and research training.
- RUN calls for development of an impact measure of research and community engagement and supports the further use of Excellence in Research for Australia results in the research block grants only with the inclusion of an impact measure.
- RUN is committed to strengthening higher degree by research training in regional Australia.

UA theme – Ensuring sustainable and targeted investment

Consistent with the Accord between our universities:

- RUN calls for a new structural adjustment fund to facilitate the consolidation of appropriate support functions across regional universities.

For more information download *Smarter Regions, Smarter Australia: Policy Advice for an Incoming Government* from www.run.edu.au

More information about UA's policy document, *A Smarter Australia*, can be found at: <http://www.smartestinvestment.com.au>

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