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More sub-bachelor and postgraduate coursework places needed in regional Australia

While the Regional Universities Network (RUN) welcomes the announcement by the Government of additional postgraduate coursework and sub-bachelor places in Australian universities, more needs to be done to expand sub-bachelor and postgraduate coursework places in regional Australia.

The Chair of RUN, Prof Peter Lee, said that the additional places would go some way to addressing the needs of regional Australian students.

“While across Australia 1,500 more places will be available for people undertaking postgraduate nursing and allied health specialities, 2,000 new places will be available for students undertaking diplomas of language and 1,000 more places will be available for students undertaking preparatory programs, more needs to be done to help us increase the number of students studying a range of disciplines in regional areas.

“There is still a significant gap between higher education attainment in regional Australia compared to that in the capitals – half the number of people in the regions have a degree compared to that in the capitals.

“As well as strongly supporting the continuation of the student demand driven system for bachelor places, which is playing a major role in lifting university participation in regional Australia, RUN advocates extending the demand driven system to sub-bachelor places. This would help regional universities better address the underpreparation of many students at school for university.

“RUN also considers that more needs to be done to address the inequities in the distribution of postgraduate coursework places that have developed over time. There is a pressing need to increase participation by regional Australians at university to provide sufficient professionals to work in regional Australia, enable regional industries to diversify and grow, and enable regional Australia to participate fully in the modern world economy,” Professor Lee said.

“Regional Australia needs trained professionals to work in the regions, to innovate and diversify regional industry, fully participate in the modern economy, to grow regional development and enhance regional productivity.”