

MEDIA RELEASE

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RUN supports recommendations of Regional Development and Decentralisation Inquiry

The recommendations of the House Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation inquiry report should be implemented to facilitate regional development and decentralisation.

The Chair of the Regional Universities Network (RUN), Prof Greg Hill, welcomes the report's recommendation that the Government should strengthen and better support regional universities as pivotal institutions for social and economic development in regional areas.

The Committee's report stressed the key role regional universities play in regional development which extends beyond the provision of tertiary courses and conducting research. The Committee found that regional universities drive innovation and change, connect well informed people and groups, develop local leadership and human capital, and enhance the social and cultural capital of regional towns and cities.

The Committee was also impressed by projects conducted by regional universities which highlighted their potential to design and deliver local strategies, and attract regional investment.

"The Committee has found that regional education is of fundamental importance to the regions, and that a National Regional Higher Education Strategy, as advocated by RUN, should be pursued," Prof Hill said.

"Legislation proposed by Cathy McGowan MP, Member for Indi, for a Regional, Rural and Remote Education Commissioner, should also be supported to ensure that such a strategy is joined up with regional development policy and programs.

"RUN welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government that there will be regional cities deals. The Committee recommends that Regional Development Australia committees should draft strategic plans for their respective areas which should inform development of the deals. Regional education, including the contribution of regional universities, should be a key part of any plans," Prof Hill said.

"RUN urges the Government to support the Committee's recommendations."

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