

MEDIA RELEASE
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RUN welcomes Labor's announcement on more student support funding

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) welcomes the announcement by the Shadow Minister for Education and Training, the Hon Tanya Plibersek, that Labor would invest an extra \$174 million for mentoring, support and other specialised programs designed to boost opportunities for university study in communities where graduation rates are low.

The Chair of RUN, Prof Greg Hill, said that the university attainment rates in regional Australia were half, or less than half, that in major cities, and that students needed further support to aspire to, and complete, university study.

“Enhancing access, outcomes, opportunities and support for regional students will build regional economies. Seventy per cent of graduates from RUN universities work in the regions and increase real wages by 3.2 per cent, compared to 20 per cent of graduates from other universities who work in regional Australia.

“We understand that the proposed initiatives would work alongside the existing Higher Education Participation and Partnerships program (HEPPP). The HEPPP has helped lift the participation of students from low SES and other equity groups at university. However, long-term, public policy commitment and funding stability is needed for relevant programs. It will take a generation to fundamentally change behaviour and address the embedded, significant, inter-generational, multi-faceted, educational disadvantage many face,” Professor Hill said.

“RUN calls for a national focus for regional higher education.”

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