

A summary of Smarter Regions, Smarter Australia

Policy Advice for an Incoming Government

Regional Australia plays a key part in Australia's national prosperity and productivity. The teaching and learning, research and community engagement undertaken by regional universities are essential to the national identity, its prosperity and our future as a nation.

RUN believes that regional universities provide the most direct and cost-effective way of further harnessing talent, developing skills and contributing to knowhow to our regions for the benefit of all Australians.

RUN strongly endorses Universities Australia's policy document, *A Smarter Australia*. This policy statement aims to be complementary to it, with a particular focus on the contribution of regional universities.

RUN's Policy Plan:

1. RUN calls for a new structural adjustment fund to facilitate consolidation of appropriate support functions across regional universities.
2. 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.
3. RUN proposes that the value of teaching and learning should be measured by meeting agreed outcomes as a result of education.
4. RUN calls for initiatives and incentives which facilitate partnerships among regional universities in teaching and learning, including in areas of national and regional need.
5. 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.



6. 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.
7. RUN supports initiatives to keep students online and accessing the internet via reliable, high speed connections.
8. 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 (RUN, for example, supports provision of an extra year on completion of undergraduate or post-graduate study);
 - Providing work rights to students who have completed a bachelors or masters at a regional campus regardless of the duration of study; and
 - 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. RUN is committed to strengthening higher degree by research training in regional Australia.



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