



Regional Universities Network (RUN)

Submission to review of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program

Key Points

- The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) has been in play since 2010 and 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 for the program over many years is needed to fundamentally change the aspiration for, participation and success at university by underrepresented groups. It will take a generation to fundamentally change behaviour and address the embedded, significant, inter-generational, multi-faceted, educational disadvantage that many face.
- HEPPP should be seen as an investment in the future, not a cost.
- The program would be more effective and efficient in achieving its objectives if the following changes were made: better focussing of the fund on universities serving communities where participation rates and university access is low (we propose a model for HEPPP based on the Sustainable Research Excellence fund); allocation of the HEPPP on a 36-month basis rather than annually to lock in longer-term goals, improve strategic focus, and give better security; and reinstatement of the funding lost from the program to at least the pre-2016 Budget level.

Introduction

The six regionally-based universities (CQUniversity, Federation University Australia (FedUni), Southern Cross University (SCU), University of New England (UNE), University of Southern Queensland (USQ), University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)) of the Regional Universities Network (RUN) are committed to addressing the inequity in representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, regional and remote Australians, people from low SES backgrounds and other equity groups at university.

While the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), the subject of the current review being undertaken by ACIL Allen Consulting for the Department of Education and Training, has had some impact, it will take decades to significantly lift the aspiration for, and participation at, university by underrepresented groups. In many cases, potential students have multiple elements of inter-generational disadvantage to overcome. A long-term program with public policy commitment and funding stability is needed for fundamental and lasting change. RUN universities teach around 110,000 students or around 9 per cent of enrolments at Australian public universities. They educate just under a quarter of Australia's regional higher education students, 29 per cent of its distance education students, around 15 per cent of its low socio-economic status (SES) students, 16 per cent of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 32 per cent of its students in enabling courses. Many students are first in family to attend university.

The majority of students at RUN universities do not come straight to university from school. Many have worked and/or undertaken post-school education prior to enrolling in undergraduate study. Many balance part-time university study with work and/or family commitments.

Given the student cohort in our universities' catchment areas, the effectiveness and targeting of the HEPPP is of great significance. It is also of major importance to regional Australia, given that there is embedded, significant, inter-generational, multi-faceted, educational disadvantage that must be addressed in the national interest.

In 2014, about 15-19 per cent of working age Australians living in regional and remote areas held a bachelor degree or above (there are lower levels of attainment with increasing distance to major cities) compared with around 33 per cent of the population in major cities.¹

In 2015, the proportion of persons aged 25-34 years with Year 12 or above was above 80 per cent in major cities and between around 61 to 64 per cent in regional Australia.² The

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014, *Education and Work 2014* Cat no. 6227 – analysis based on data downloads.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015, *Education and Work Australia*, May 2015. Analysis based on data cubes 2 and 7.

proportion of 25-34 year olds with a bachelor degree or above in major cities was about 42 per cent compared to around 21 to 18 per cent in regional Australia (becoming lower further away from major cities). Significantly, the proportion of regional Australians with a bachelors' degree or above in inner and outer regional areas has marginally declined from 2014 to 2015. ³

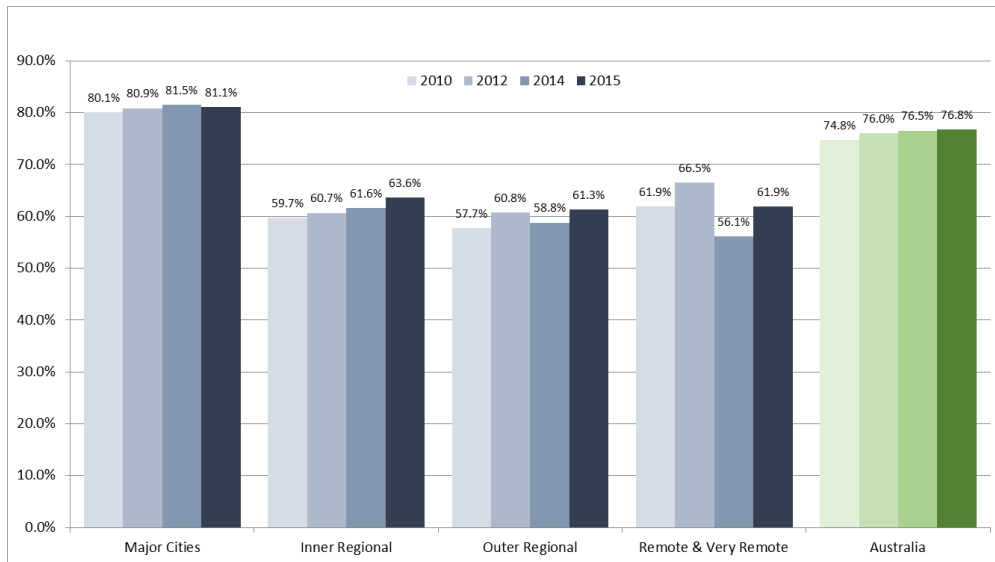


Fig. 1 The proportion of persons aged 25-34 years with Year 12 or above, by remoteness area, year (based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data).

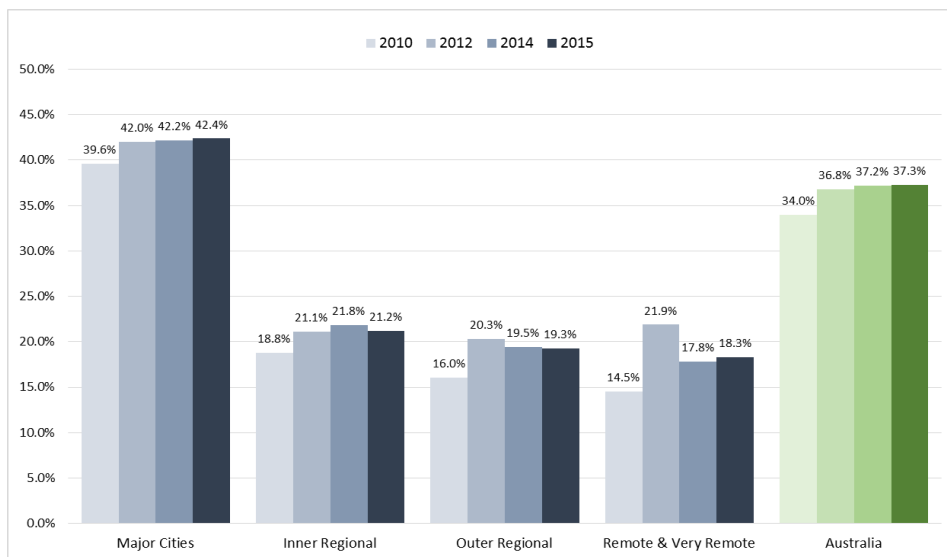


Fig. 2 The proportion of 25-34 year olds with a bachelor degree or above, by remoteness area, year (based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data)

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015, Education and Work Australia, May 2015. Analysis based on data cubes 2 and 7.

The HEPPP, and its successor, the Higher Education Participation Program, designed to increase and support the participation in higher education of students from low SES backgrounds and other equity groups at university, has assisted both regional students and regional universities.

Widening participation activities that have been funded fall into 3 sequential groups. Firstly outreach activities to schools and community groups to raise awareness of and aspiration for university study. These activities involve establishing relationships with students through their schools and are targeted at students from late primary through to the middle secondary years. The focus of these activities is to demystify university and build confidence that 'people like us' can go to university. These activities involve key influencers: parents / carers and teachers, student role models /mentors and importantly, experiential learning activities. The second group of activities involve those that promote access to university and include pathways on-campus programs, admissions procedures and aimed at promoting enrolment at university. The third group of activities focuses on supporting students once they have accepted an offer and includes scholarships, to increase affordability / relieve some of the (non-HECS related) financial burden.

The nature of the work is built on stable long-term relationships between education providers and their communities. Major change cannot be achieved in a few years. A stable funding platform and long-term public policy commitment is needed.

We are of the view that the targeting of HEPPP, the timeframe over which funding is granted, and the size of the fund should be revisited.

Further details are given in our response to the questions below.

Responses to Questions

To what extent is the HEPPP improving access to undergraduate courses for people from low SES backgrounds and improving their retention and completion rates? What HEPPP activities have been most effective in achieving these objectives?

HEPPP has contributed to the improvement in participation of people from low SES backgrounds (and others) in undergraduate courses through outreach and engagement with people over wide geographic areas who would otherwise not consider participating in higher education.

RUN universities have seen a significant growth in students from low SES and regional backgrounds over the last few years. At RUN universities in 2014, 30.4 per cent (postcode, 2006 SEIFA) of RUN universities' commencing, domestic, undergraduate students were from low SES backgrounds and their enrolments had increased by 45.3 per cent between 2009 and 2014. Enrolments by commencing, domestic, undergraduate students from regional and remote backgrounds at our universities grew by 35.5 per cent between 2009 and 2014

(RUN, 2016).⁴ Enrolments by commencing, domestic, undergraduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students grew by 72.8 per cent.

However, HEPPP has only been in play since 2010. Short-term success is important, but a long-term program is needed to fundamentally address the underrepresentation of low SES and other key equity groups at university.

HEPPP should be seen as an investment in the future, not a cost.

While RUN supports the HEPPP focussing on low SES students (as low SES is the most common denominator across all areas of disadvantage), we note that the program has also been applied specifically to other groups, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (at the commencement of the program universities were invited to nominate other equity groups for funding). RUN supports application of the program more widely than solely focussing on low SES students, but does not support its application to more generalised equity outcomes such as women studying STEM, which we consider should be addressed by other, purpose-designed initiatives.

HEPPP projects in RUN universities have been focussed on student participation, progress and attainment; and access, both pre-entry and admission, and outreach. A range of programs have had positive impact with respect to both participation and access.

RUN universities have relatively high proportions of low SES, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, first in family and regional students, indicating that our approach is largely successful in attracting and retaining these students. However, much more work needs to be done for students from these groups to participate and succeed at university at the same overall rate as students from medium and high SES backgrounds.

With respect to access (pre-entry and admission), and outreach, projects employ a whole-of-university approach. Sustained connectivity of the programs ensures the building of capacity for higher education. Engaging students early in their education creates an ongoing relationship between the university and its community.

Student participation, progress and attainment projects are commonly linked to retention and student success strategies, with a significant focus on first year. Specific projects include orientation sessions and support (including for distance students); transition support (including via digital modules); equity and leadership scholarships; mentoring programs (including with alumni in specific industries); academic support, including digital literacy, maths and stats support; engagement activities; support desks for students in libraries; bursaries for university placements; and various projects targeted to mature age students.

⁴ RUN, 2016, unpublished, from Department of Education and Training Selected Higher Education Student Statistics, Appendix 2, Equity Groups, for 2014 and 2009.

Some specific projects of note follow (further details can be provided by individual universities):

- *Reaching On, Reaching Further*, and equity bursary programs (targeted initiatives that seek to minimise the educational disadvantage coupled with support) (USQ). Retention and completion rates have been lifted.
- *UniMentor* (SCU) – assists commencing students to successfully transition to university life and study during their first session by providing support through student mentors. It is offered to all commencing students with a focus on students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. First year students commencing in session 1, 2014, who had a mentor continued onto their second year of study in 2015 at a higher rate (73 per cent) than the general student population. Better progression rates have been noted for participating students over the life of the program (with a 6.8% average higher retention rate over the period 2010 – 2015).
- *Math-Stats Drop in Support Centre* (FedUni). “As-needed” drop-in support for students experiencing specific difficulties with mathematics and statistics in their studies. There are freely available resources for those students struggling with common conceptual misunderstandings. There has been a decrease in the number of students failing relevant subjects.
- *YouTutor pilot* (FedUni)– a personalised and no pressure learning tool to address the need around flexibility around work and family schedules, thus improving educational outcomes for low SES students.
- *USC Equity Bursary* – a criteria based system for distributing funds to the most disadvantaged students and which privileges multiple disadvantage.
- CQUniversity’s *Retention and Return to Study Program*, which has followed up with over a 1,100 who had lost contact with the university over the last three years (either due to failure to re-enrol or who had withdrawn), to identify the reasons for discontinuation and to support those wishing to return to complete their studies. Of those contacted and interviewed, at least a third have re-connected with the view to completing their programs with the support of CQUniversity support staff.
- The *Peer Learning Program* (UNE) aims to establish an inclusive environment of peer based collaborative learning that is viewed as an efficient, stimulating and mainstream activity. The objective of the program is to develop an institutional strategy for enacting peer learning projects involving domestic undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds to promote access, participation, progress, attainment, and lifelong engagement with the higher education sector. The UNE Peer Learning Program offers a suite of peer learning opportunities, including the following projects:

1. Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS): units offered by the Schools of Environmental and Rural Science, Science and Technology, and Arts
2. Peer-to-Peer Help: units offered by UNE Business School
3. Peer-to-Peer Help: units offered by the School of Law
4. Peer Writing: cross disciplinary, non-unit specific.

Details on successful projects and strategies with respect to access and outreach are given below in answer to the following question.

To what extent have HEPPP outreach activities with schools, state/territory governments, VET providers, community groups and other stakeholders improved low SES individuals' access to and participation and success in higher education? What types of outreach activities have been most effective?

Feedback from schools as well as research indicates that outreach activities need to start early and be sustained over time, focussing on both attainment and academic readiness.

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education has reported that successful HEPPP funded programs engage with students early and in a sustained manner.⁵ A Queensland consortium of eight universities focuses its activities from year 6, whilst the Bridges program, a consortium of five NSW universities, focuses its activities with students from year 3.

Working in partnership with regional and local schools, the VET sector, communities and industry is important in lifting higher education participation rates.

All RUN universities have significant outreach projects. Some specific projects of note follow (further details and information about specific projects can be provided by individual universities):

- *Opening Doors and Choices* projects (USQ) which involve outreach to schools have resulted in increased participant aspiration and awareness levels concerning pathways to higher education.
- *Student experience day* events (USQ) report a 60 per cent rise in interest of previously disinterested participants in attending university and 86 per cent of student participants indicating that event attendance helped them learn about possible career choices.
- *UNIBOUND PROGRAM YEAR 5-9* (SCU). Working closely with partner schools and academic areas of the university the UNIBOUND program provides experiences that

⁵ National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, 2014, Ann Steward, Making a Difference Together: The Importance of School and University Partnerships in Widening Participation in Higher Education.

were exciting, motivating and empowering, increasing students' access to and understanding of university and associated career pathways. Over 3,645 students from 38 schools (18 primary, 17 high schools and 3 central schools) across years 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 participated in more than 75 school-based and on-campus activities in 2015.

- *ACCESS4U* Year 11-12 (SCU). Forty-one students participated in 2015, and 60 per cent successfully completed the program with 19 post-access offers made (SCU).
- *Gippsland Access and Participation (GAP) Project* (FedUni) – an integrated and comprehensive program of activities involved secondary maths and science teachers and students from across Gippsland. Teacher feedback on activities is positive, encouraging and reflective. Student feedback indicates greater involvement and awareness.
- *Discord to Harmony* (FedUni) – addressing the challenges of mature aged VET students in partner institutions as they adjust to higher education. An online space was developed to give the students a place to connect with other students, give support, and confidence in tackling the skills required for higher education.
- *Integrated Access and Pathways Strategy* (USC) – involving STEM, non-STEM and Career development activities.
- The *Growing Regional and Agricultural Students in Science (GRASS)* program (UNE) engages teachers and students in target schools from rural, remote and low socioeconomic regions, engendering strong links and widespread participation in the educational access activities. The UNE GRASS program inspires students towards careers in science, and helps develop a greater understanding of the science-based careers supporting agriculture that are available via a tertiary pathway. Analysis has been completed to confirm the students who have completed this UNE GRASS IPS and who then decide to continue studies at UNE are performing at a higher grade point average (GPA) and are making faster progress to completion of their degrees when compared with their peers at the university.

A number of RUN universities contribute to the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) through their HEPPP funding. There has been significant success with the AIME program which uses mentoring to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait high school students and support their transition to university and other post-school activities.

Students completing the program are proven to finish school and transition through to university, employment and further education and training at the same rate as every Australian child – effectively closing the gap in educational outcomes e.g. SCU reports 90.8 per cent of progression from Year 11-12, and, of 58 post year 12 pathways students, 25 went to university, 22 to further education and training, and 10 into employment (leaving only 1 unknown). In 2015 SCU had 494 mentees and 54 mentors.

Further details are available at <https://aimementoring.com/about/reports/>.

How have projects funded under the National Priorities Pool component of the HEPPP supported more effective implementation of the HEPPP nationally and at an institutional level?

The National Priorities Pool (NPP) of HEPPP has funded worthwhile projects using an effective model to maximise the outcomes from available funds. The partnership model for the projects has enabled participating universities to investigate issues in greater depth than they would individually by employing economies of scale – the spread of knowledge arising from the relevant research has been maximised.

At both the national and institutional levels, NPP projects have and are contributing to enhanced understanding of the complex range of factors associated with the underrepresented populations targeted by HEPPP. The projects have contributed to the development of innovations leading to enhanced practices in addressing disadvantage.

RUN universities have led and participated in many projects under the National Priorities Pool (NPP) of HEPPP, including the following:

FedUni (lead) and RUN partners (CQUni, SCU, UNE, USC, USQ).	Facilitating success for students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds at regional universities	\$146 500
CQU (lead), FedUni, La Trobe, USC, Newcastle and James Cook	A comparative evaluation of the efficacy of the equity strategies employed by Australian universities	\$156 686
NCSEHE, Curtin, La Trobe and Deakin	Enabling Programmes for Disadvantaged Students	\$ 156 000
USC (lead)	My Tertiary Education Day	\$323,000
USC (lead)	Removing barriers to engagement by tertiary students living in a rural community	\$59,195

Publications flowing from the projects have had/are having an impact on practice as well as policy at both the institutional and national level. Some relevant publications are given in Appendix A.

If funding from HEPPP for NPP projects was to cease, there is no other alternative source of funding which would fill the gap on the same scale.

To what extent have HEPPP activities been incorporated into universities standard approaches and standard activities?

HEPPP activities have been incorporated in a significant way into the standard approaches and activities of RUN universities.

Without HEPPP funding, our outreach activities couldn't happen at the same scale. Regional universities are faced with the tyranny of geography in terms of their large student catchment areas – HEPPP funding covers the costs of travel over hundreds of kilometres for staff and students to visit communities, and to bring potential students to university campuses.

In order to optimise the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of HEPPP, activities funded under the program are commonly leveraged against core areas of business activity such as career development and other non-HEPPP funded pathways activities. e.g. the Tertiary Preparation Program at USQ. Thus, the interconnectivity between HEPPP and other service delivery areas within the university is enhanced, and a continuum of support services are provided to students from pre-enrolment to graduation. Universities make “in kind” contributions to optimise the activities funded by HEPPP.

To what extent are HEPPP activities providing individual, societal and economic benefits? What flow on effects have there been to the community and the economy?

The lack of an evaluation framework for HEPPP (which should have been established at the start of the program) and inconsistent application of funding have hindered an effective way to systematically evaluate the individual, societal and economic benefits of the program and its flow on effects. We don't have the mechanism to collect relevant data. It should be noted that various initiatives such as the NPP funded project 'A comparative evaluation of the efficacy of the equity strategies employed by Australian universities' have been funded to undertake significant work that could and should inform future strategies for evaluating HEPPP initiatives.

Individual projects are having a positive impact. One example is USQ's *Making the connections* which is focussed on providing access to higher education for individuals (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) in correctional centres. The project is introducing internet-independent digital technologies into correctional centres across five states to provide access to pre-tertiary and undergraduate programs to prisoners. Over two and a half years, the project has accrued nearly 1000 enrolments with retention rates approaching 60 per cent. This figure is significant given the complex nature of the

correctional environment with frequent lockdowns, disruptions, movement and release and the poor prior academic records of this cohort. Making the Connection has led in a dramatic increase in the numbers of eligible prisoners enrolled in higher education in Queensland from 3.1 per cent in 2012 to 4.7 per cent in 2015.

In a broader sense, the overall benefits of more university graduates to the community and economy are many.

The Australian economy is moving from a heavy reliance on mining and manufacturing to a new era in which skills, knowledge and ideas will become our most precious commodities. By improving opportunities for people to access higher education, RUN universities help unlock the full human and innovative potential of regional Australia for the national good. The jobs and industries of the future will need highly skilled university graduates who can connect regional Australia with the global, innovative economy. We need to generate new jobs and industries through innovation to make regional economies more resilient. Through university study and research, students become more highly skilled, and are better prepared to be creative, entrepreneurial and flexible to meet future job challenges.

A report by Cadence Economics for Universities Australia has estimated that for every 1000 university graduates entering the workforce 120 new jobs are created for people without a university degree.⁶

Has the need that the HEPPP addresses changed over time? Do the reasons for the creation of the HEPPP still exist to the same extent?

The need that HEPPP addresses has not significantly changed over the few years the program has operated. The reasons for the creation of HEPPP still exist to the same extent.

In its discussion paper, *Driving Innovation, Fairness and Excellence in Australian Higher Education*⁷, the Government states that it is not acceptable that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and people from regional and remote locations remain under-represented in higher education despite the opportunities provided for them. The paper indicates that “the proportion of people from regional and remote Australia who participate in higher education continues to decline in real terms”. Clearly, this is an area which needs future focus. Increasingly, there will be the need for more highly skilled workers who are university graduates as automation take over more low skilled jobs. Within two decades, more than 40 per cent of Australian jobs that exist today may disappear as technology

⁶ Cadence Economics, 2016, *The Graduate Effect: Higher Education Spillovers to the Australian Workforce*. Report for Universities Australia. Available from <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/Media-and-Events/commissioned-studies/The-graduate-effect--higher-education-spillovers-to-the-Australian-workforce>

⁷ Australian Government, 2016, *Driving Innovation, Fairness and Excellence in Australian Higher Education*. Available at: <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/driving-innovation-fairness-and-excellence-australian-education>.

reshapes entire industries, professions and work practices.⁸ Regional Australia will be the worst affected part of the nation, due to the high proportion of low skilled jobs. The regions need more highly skilled, university-trained professionals to drive the innovative industries of the future.

The gap in higher education attainment rates between major cities and regional areas is highlighted in the statistics presented in the Introduction.

The under-representation of low SES students in the application process to university is illustrated in Fig. 3⁹ – it remains well below that of medium and high SES students.

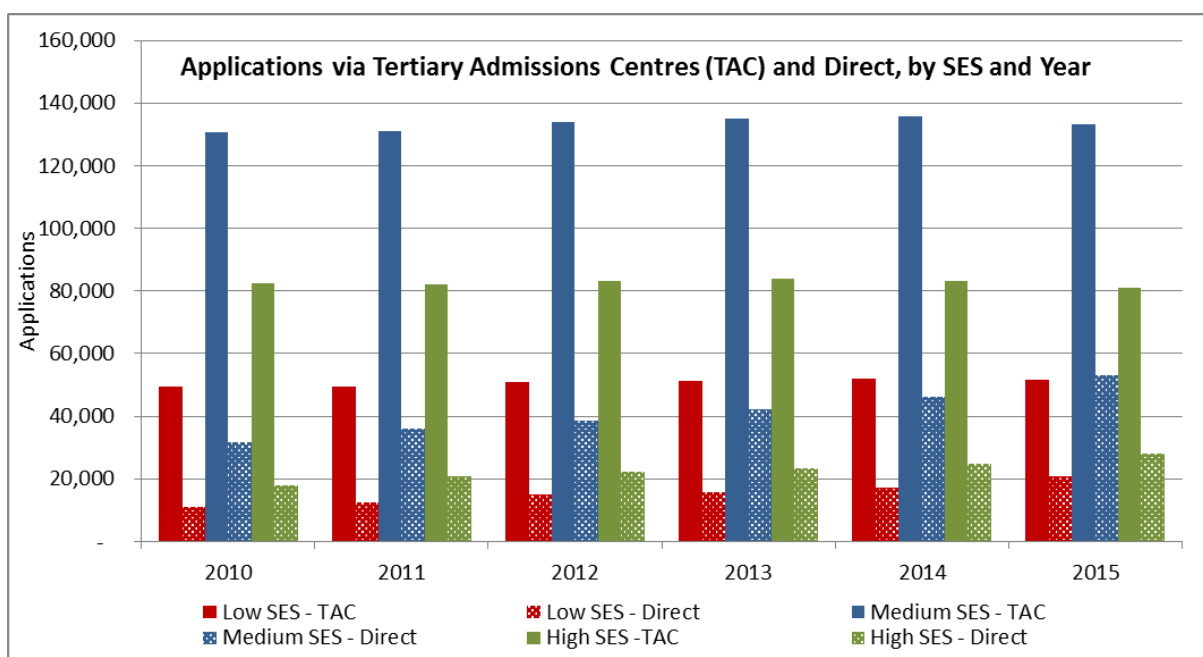


Fig. 3. Applications from low, medium and high SES students to universities (from Department of Education and Training student data).

A long-term program with public policy commitment and funding stability is needed to fundamentally change the aspiration for, and participation at, university by underrepresented groups. It will take a generation to fundamentally lift the aspiration of students in relevant groups, and address the embedded, significant, inter-generational, multi-faceted, educational disadvantage that many face.

⁸ Durrant-Whyte, H, McCalman, I, O’Callaghan, S, Reid, A, & Steinberg, D, 2015, “The impact of computerisation and automation on future employment”, in Committee for Economic Development of Australia, Australia’s Future Workforce?, CEDA, Melbourne, p.58.

⁹ RUN, 2016, unpublished, from Department of Education and Training Selected Higher Education Student Statistics.

Is the structure of the HEPPP effective and efficient for achieving its objectives?

HEPPP would be more effective and efficient in achieving its objectives if various changes were made to the program. The targeting of HEPPP, the timeframe over which funding is granted, and the size of the fund should be revisited.

HEPPP should be concentrated where participation rates and university access is low. Although this largely applies to students from low SES backgrounds, this is not always the case. Regional universities provide the only realistic option for many regional students to attend university. These students are tied to their communities for reasons of personal, family and work commitments, and financial circumstance. Concentrating the HEPPP funding in universities that serve relevant communities, including regional universities, will maximise its impact and deliver economies of scale. Given that regional universities use HEPPP funding to support those who will largely stay in the regions to work, better focussing of the fund in the regions will help build regional economies.

In its *Driving Innovation, Fairness and Excellence Discussion* paper, the Government noted that it wasn't acceptable that regional Australians continued to be under-represented in higher education and that this issue needed to be addressed.

Elite universities commonly use the funding from the program for a few scholarships for a relatively small number of excellent students. HEPPP funding in these institutions does not have the breadth of impact that it does in regional universities. Elite universities have large numbers of students and are able to cross-subsidise equity funding from other sources. RUN uses the HEPPP funding to support those who will largely stay in the regions to work – it is crucial. Without it, we cannot undertake the outreach and support activities required.

Three of RUN's six universities have the highest percentage of low SES students of all universities (CQUniversity – 34.0 per cent; University of Southern Queensland – 30.0 per cent; Southern Cross University – 25.7 per cent) as shown from 2014 (SA1) student data in Table 1 below.

We propose that HEPPP funding should be delivered broadly based on the Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE) program funding model (part of the Research Block Grants). Under the SRE program, all institutions receive a certain amount of "base" funding (20 per cent), but more funding is directed to those institutions that perform above certain performance (in this case, research funding) thresholds. Thirteen per cent of the fund is allocated to universities above Threshold 1, and 67 per cent to those above Threshold 2.

In the case of the HEPPP, we propose that 20 per cent of the fund is shared between all institutions based on their proportion of the total of low SES students, with another 20 per cent shared between those universities with 10 per cent or greater of low SES students (Threshold 1), based on the proportion of those students, and that the remaining 50 per cent of the program funding is shared between those institutions with 17 per cent or greater of low SES students (Threshold 2), based on the relative proportion of that group of students.

The split in thresholds is shown in Table 1, with Threshold 1 applying to the universities covered by the grey and yellow shading, and Threshold 2 applying to those covered by yellow shading only:

Table 1 All Domestic Undergraduate Students by State, Institution and Equity Group, 2014

		Low SES (SA1 measure) ^(a)	All Domestic UG Students	Share low SES based on SA1 measure
	Institution			
1	Central Queensland University	3,784	11,117	34.0%
2	University of Southern Queensland	4,528	15,114	30.0%
3	Southern Cross University	2,465	9,581	25.7%
4	University of Tasmania	5,026	19,548	25.7%
5	University of Western Sydney	8,165	33,203	24.6%
6	Charles Sturt University	5,570	22,684	24.6%
7	The University of New England	3,233	13,298	24.3%
8	Federation University Australia	1,361	5,625	24.2%
9	The University of Newcastle	5,039	20,970	24.0%
10	James Cook University	2,922	12,166	24.0%
11	University of South Australia	4,438	19,477	22.8%
12	Victoria University	3,294	14,517	22.7%
13	Flinders University	2,606	13,239	19.7%
14	Murdoch University	1,963	10,777	18.2%
15	University of the Sunshine Coast	1,476	8,149	18.1%
16	La Trobe University	3,894	22,074	17.6%
17	University of Wollongong	2,512	14,390	17.5%
18	Charles Darwin University	1,102	6,325	17.4%
19	University of Divinity	85	494	17.2%
20	Swinburne University of Technology	3,344	21,385	15.6%
21	Griffith University	4,317	28,336	15.2%
22	Edith Cowan University	2,473	16,521	15.0%
23	The University of Adelaide	2,089	15,387	13.6%
24	RMIT University	3,357	24,963	13.4%
25	Curtin University of Technology	3,406	26,372	12.9%
26	Deakin University	3,988	31,096	12.8%
27	Australian Catholic University	2,361	19,744	12.0%
28	University of Technology, Sydney	2,350	20,547	11.4%
29	Queensland University of Technology	3,344	30,140	11.1%
30	The University of Queensland	3,027	29,923	10.1%
31	Monash University	3,101	31,277	9.9%
32	The University of New South Wales	2,360	26,589	8.9%
33	Macquarie University	1,906	22,778	8.4%
34	The University of Melbourne	1,392	17,401	8.0%
35	Bond University	193	2,424	8.0%

36	University of Sydney	2,034	26,765	7.6%
37	University of Canberra	710	10,042	7.1%
38	The University of Notre Dame Australia	617	8,783	7.0%
39	The University of Western Australia	996	16,345	6.1%
40	The Australian National University	278	8,004	3.5%
TOTAL 2014 (including NUHEPs)		117,191	745,733	15.7%

(a) Low SES SA1 measure is based on a geocoded SA1 (Statistical Area 1), with the SES value derived from the 2011 SEIFA for SA1, where SA1s in the bottom 25% of the population aged 15-64 being classified as Low SES.

The isolation of the HEPPP as a single, stand-alone program makes it vulnerable when funds are being sought for other purposes e.g. the 20 per cent cut to the program over the forward estimates sustained in the 2016 Budget.

We propose that HEPPP funding should be allocated to universities on a 36 month basis rather than annually. This would lock in longer term goals, improve strategic focus and give some longer-term security to the fund. It would greatly enhance the capacity of universities to plan, implement and more holistically deliver focussed services to better assist students.

We strongly support reinstatement of the funding lost from the program to at least the pre-2016 Budget level.

What changes to the HEPPP could further assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access, participate in, and succeed at higher education?

See the response to the previous question.

APPENDIX A - National Priority Pool Projects and Publications

Publications relating to the NPP projects listed below:

1. FedUni (lead) and RUN partners (CQUni, SCU, UNE, USC, USQ).	<i>Facilitating success for students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds at regional universities</i>	National Priorities Pool	\$146 500
2. CQU (lead), FedUni, La Trobe, USC, Newcastle and James Cook	<i>A comparative evaluation of the efficacy of the equity strategies employed by Australian universities</i>	National Priorities Pool	\$156 686
3. NCSEHE, Curtin, La Trobe and Deakin	<i>Enabling Programmes for Disadvantaged Students</i>	National Priorities Pool	\$ 156 000

1. Pitman, T, Trinidad, S., Devlin, M., Harvey, A., Brett, M., & McKay, J. (2016, under review with federal department). *Pathways to higher education: A comparison of the efficacy of enabling and sub-bachelor pathways for disadvantaged students*. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Perth.
2. Pitman, T., Harvey, A., McKay, J., Devlin, M., Trinidad, S., & Brett, M. (invited, under review). The impact of enabling programs on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, success and retention in Australian higher education, in S. Larkin, J. Frawley; J. Smith; (Eds.) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pathways and transitions into Higher Education: From policy to practice*. Springer.
3. McKay, J., Pitman, T., Devlin, M., Trinidad, S., Harvey, A., & Brett, M. (accepted for publication). The use of enabling programs as a pathway to higher education by disadvantaged students in Australia, in Eva Bernat (Ed.), *University Pathways: A Global Perspective*, Springer.