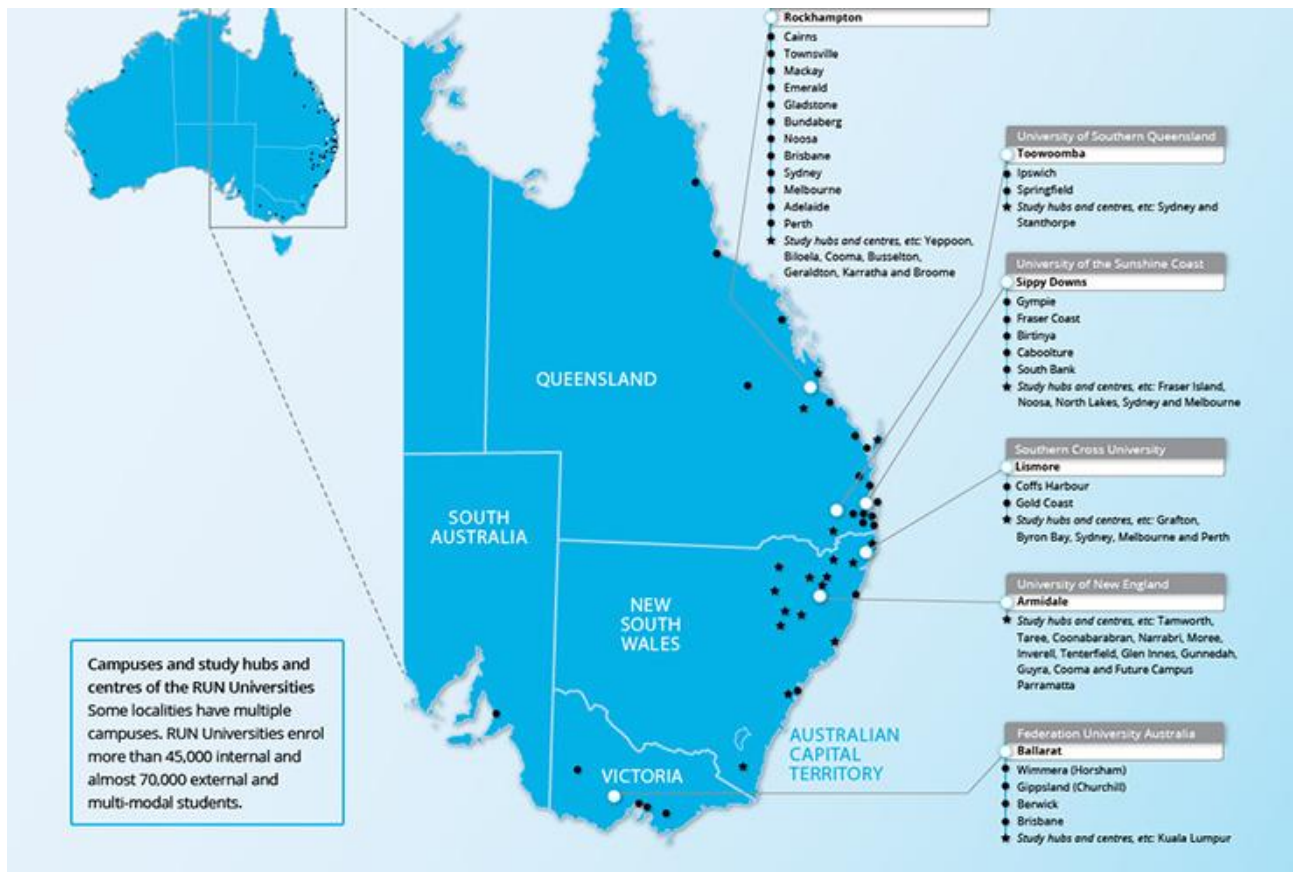


**What is RUN?** <http://www.run.edu.au/>

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) is a network of six universities headquartered in regional Australia, all with strong links to their respective communities and regions. The members of the network are: CQUniversity, Southern Cross University, Federation University Australia, the University of New England, the University of Southern Queensland and the University of the Sunshine Coast. RUN member universities are committed to playing a transformative role in their communities. They play an important role in building the educational and research capacity of their regions, primarily by training skilled graduates who contribute to labour and growth. More broadly, they make a major contribution to regional economic, social, cultural and environmental development.

**Figure 1 shows the location of RUN campuses and study hubs:**



## **What does RUN do?**

RUN members work together to:

- Provide policy advice to government, particularly with regard to tertiary education and regional development.
- Strengthen and promote the contributions of regional universities to regional and national development.
- Build institutional capacity and sustainability through the sharing of best practice in educational delivery, training, research and organisational management, particularly with reference to regional contexts.

RUN is governed by its Vice-Chancellors Group. The position of Chair rotates among member universities every two years. As at June 2018, the Chair is Professor Greg Hill, Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of the Sunshine Coast. The Executive Director of RUN is Dr Caroline Perkins. RUN engages with government on issues of importance to its members and develops submissions and statements on policy matters.

Groups have been established in the areas of teaching and learning, regional development, research and to promote the interests of female staff, and Indigenous staff. RUN groups collaborate on specific projects, share insights and best practice, engage internationally with comparable organisations, convene conferences, and pursue and commission research. The group has a partnership with the UK MillionPlus Universities Group.

### ***Education***

RUN universities:

- Enrol almost 115,000 higher education students, or about 9% of all students enrolled at Australian public universities (2016). Two RUN universities are dual sector institutions, offering both higher education and VET programs (CQUni and Federation University Australia). All RUN universities engage closely with the VET and schools systems.
- Have a higher than average share of mature aged students, students from regional and remote backgrounds, Indigenous students, students from low SES backgrounds, and students who are 'first in family' to attend university. A high proportion of students are part-time or study externally or on a multi-modal basis. Many students have substantial work and/or caring responsibilities.
  - Not surprisingly, RUN students, on average, tend to take longer to complete their studies, and retention rates are not as strong as those in universities with a higher proportion of students who are full-time, and school leavers.
  - RUN universities are, however, deeply committed to raising the educational aspirations and attainment of their communities and offer a wide range of support mechanisms to assist their students.
  - In general, RUN universities perform highly in terms of surveys of student satisfaction and employment outcomes.

### ***Research***

RUN universities:

- RUN universities are committed to delivering excellent research that is important to their communities. Their research agendas are focussed, innovative, and socially-connected.

- The research capacity of RUN universities is growing rapidly. RUN research has been assessed at the highest international standards in fields such as agricultural sciences and forestry; biological sciences; earth sciences; pure and applied mathematical sciences; and nursing and other medical and health sciences.

### **Contribution to regional economic development**

A recent study commissioned by RUN found that RUN universities:

- Deliver an additional \$1.7bn in their regional economies. This contribution is driven through several effects:
  - Jobs and productivity contribute to the supply of labour and growth for their regions – and regional Australia in general. Around 7 out of 10 RUN graduates will go on to work in a regional area compared to a national average of 2 out of 10 graduates who work in the regions.
  - Graduates earn a premium in wages, in line with their level of study (13 per cent for a diploma, 32 per cent for a bachelors qualification, and 41 per cent for masters or PhD). This results in an increase in real wages in relevant regions by an average of 3.2 per cent.
  - Student and university spending drives significant demand for goods and services in the regional areas of RUN university campuses. RUN students spend approximately \$480m in their campus regions and RUN universities spend \$1.59b.
  - RUN university research drives innovation and productivity in aligned industries across Australia. RUN universities have had sustained growth in higher degree research income and research publications.
- Provide further social and economic contributions, such as improved social mobility and cohesion.

### **Current issues:**

- The Government's Mid-Year Fiscal and Economic Outcomes Statement (MYEFO) 2017 disproportionately affected regional universities. Our institutions are more dependent on government funding than larger, metropolitan universities. We need to continue to grow regional higher education attainment, which is about half or less than the rate in major cities, and the funding freeze is impacting on our ability to expand campuses and courses.
- RUN supports a National Regional Higher Education Strategy, which advocates for a place-based approach to regional higher education, and a formal role for regional universities in regional development policy and programs.  
<http://www.run.edu.au/resources/National%20Regional%20Higher%20Education%20Strategy%20Framework.pdf>
- We also advocate for a National Regional Education Commissioner, part of whose role would be to advise on the implementation of a National Regional Higher Education Strategy.
- We support Cathy McGowan MP's Private Members Bill, Higher Education Support Amendment (National Regional Higher Education Strategy) Bill 2018.
- Performance funding for universities – Nous Group has developed a *Performance Framework for Regional Universities*, which includes a broad range of measures which captures the social and economic contribution of regional universities, as well as weighted attrition and completion rates.  
[http://www.run.edu.au/cb\\_pages/publications.php](http://www.run.edu.au/cb_pages/publications.php)

### **Priorities for Government support:**

In line with the current issues identified above, RUN seeks Government support for:

- The ability to grow student load at regional campuses.
- A National Regional Higher Education Strategy.
- A Regional Education Commissioner.
- The adoption of the RUN/Nous *Performance Framework for Regional Universities*.  
[http://www.run.edu.au/cb\\_pages/publications.php](http://www.run.edu.au/cb_pages/publications.php)
- The inclusion of regional universities and other regional tertiary education providers in regional city deals.