Regional Universities Network welcomes government response to Inquiry into Rural and Regional Education

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) today welcomed the Australian Government’s response to the Senate inquiry into rural and regional access to secondary and tertiary education opportunities.

While acknowledging the government’s initiatives to improve access and participation in education, the Chair of RUN, Professor David Battersby, said that more needed to be done to lift Year 12 completions and participation in tertiary education in rural and regional Australia.

"While various initiatives have been put in place to assist students attend school, Year 12 completions in regional Australia are 20 per cent less than those in capital cities" Professor Battersby said.

"Increasing Year 12 completion rates is a long-term challenge and requires a multi-pronged approach. It is key to increasing the participation of students at university.

"The government has put in place initiatives to assist students attend university, such as relocation and start-up scholarships. Regional universities are benefiting from purpose-designed schemes such as the Structural Adjustment Fund.

"RUN welcomes the government’s commitment to undertake a study into the feasibility and merit of an income-contingent loan scheme for students who are required to move away from home to undertake formal clinical or other practicums. We also welcome the government’s support for a review of the impact of initiatives such as the Structural Adjustment Fund, compacts and student-driven demand funding, on regional universities.

"RUN encourages the government to consider and implement other initiatives to attract students to regional universities," Professor Battersby said.

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