

MEDIA RELEASE

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Higher education relief package gives welcome support to regional universities

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, of a higher education relief package, including guaranteed funding for universities at current levels, funding for short, online courses, and regulatory fee relief.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Helen Bartlett, said that the package would provide some certainty for regional universities, particularly around funding for domestic students.

“In an environment where university operations are becoming increasingly challenging, the commitment provides certainty around base funding and will assist regional universities in managing their operations and supporting students to continue their studies.

“It also provides an opportunity for the development of sub-degree and microcredentials in priority areas relevant to regional Australia, including nursing, teaching, health, IT and science,” Professor Bartlett said.

“As anchor institutions in their regions, RUN universities have a vital role to play in supporting their communities through the restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the recovery period, once the economy starts to come out of ‘hibernation’.

“RUN is beginning to consider post-pandemic opportunities to support industry and boost economic development, to strengthen and renew partnerships with industry and community stakeholders, and to align our research expertise and capability with areas of need in the communities in which we operate,” Professor Bartlett said.

“We look forward to working with the government to maximize the contribution of regional universities in sustaining and rebuilding regional communities, including through the implementation of the recommendations from the National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy.”

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