

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**25 August 2020**

**RUN welcomes stronger regional focus in Job-ready Graduates package**

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) has welcomed changes made today to the Commonwealth Government's draft Job-ready Graduates legislation.

RUN Chair Professor Helen Bartlett said the changes had addressed key issues identified by the network in the reform package and strengthened the legislation's regional focus.

Professor Bartlett said adjustments to government funding for social work, behavioural science and mental health programs and how the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) is paid would encourage more regional students to study in regional Australia.

"Decreasing the student contribution for social work, mental health/behavioural science and psychology (when studied as professional pathways) by about half of that originally proposed so that it aligns with the contribution for allied health, will help more students to qualify as professionals in these areas and meet regional community needs," she said.

"Adjusting the TAP so it is paid to a university as a scholarship fund for regional students, based on the proportion of regional, rural and remote students at an institution, will ensure that regional universities can encourage regional students to study in regional Australia."

Professor Helen Bartlett said the majority of graduates from regional campuses stayed and worked in regional Australia, contributing to the economic and social development of those regions.

"We thank both the Minister for Education, Dan Tehan, and the Minister for Regional Education, Andrew Gee, for listening and responding to RUN's concerns," she said.

"The higher education sector needs certainty, and more university places next year to meet growing demand.

"RUN fully supports the timely passage of the bill to enable relevant arrangements to be put in place prior to 2021."

**Contacts:** Dr Caroline Perkins, Executive Director, 0408 482 736  
Bernadette Smon, Media Adviser, 0478 495 457

**Website:** [www.run.edu.au](http://www.run.edu.au)

**Twitter:** [@RegUniNet](https://twitter.com/RegUniNet)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/regionaluniversitiesnetwork](https://www.facebook.com/regionaluniversitiesnetwork)