

25 October 2022

BUDGET DELIVERS MIXED BAG FOR REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) welcomes the measures outlined in the 2022-23 Federal Budget noting the focus on delivering election promises.

Chair of RUN, Professor Nick Klomp, said that the measures outlined in the Budget demonstrate a welcomed commitment to Australia's higher education system.

"We are pleased to see the focus in the budget on delivering key election promises for the future sustainability of the higher education sector and our regions.

"In particular, the funding for the additional 20,000 Commonwealth Supported Places and the Australian Universities Accord, which will see a review of Australia's higher education system to drive increased accessibility, affordability, quality, certainty, sustainability and prosperity, is vital to ensuring the continued excellence of Australia's higher education sector.

"Regional universities look forward to working with the expert panel of eminent Australians and the Government, as they lead the Accord development, to deliver outcomes that benefit all Australians," said Professor Klomp.

While RUN welcomes the solidification of important election commitments, they are disappointed to see that the \$142.7 million Education Infrastructure in Regional Australia Program from the previous budget has been abandoned.

"Regional universities are in dire need of a dedicated infrastructure funding source, after nearly a decade of no proactive Government infrastructure funding", said RUN Executive Director, Mr Alec Webb

Regional universities operate in unique circumstances, and do not have the benefit of drawing down on billion-dollar surpluses to fund the vital infrastructure that ensures we can continue to meet our social charter.

RUN was pleased to see the continuation of the dedicated \$118.9 million Regional Trailblazers Universities funding, acknowledging that this will further increase opportunities for regional universities to demonstrate and strengthen the capacity of regional industry and universities to work together collaboratively to deliver solutions to real and current issues.

RUN also welcomes the announcement of two new regional programs: the 'Growing Regions Program'; and 'Precincts & Partnerships Program', totalling \$1 billion, and looks forward to working constructively with the Government to establish how these funds will operate, ensuring that regional universities are able to lead and participate in these programs.

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