

14 April 2023

Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

**Re: Education Legislation Amendment (Startup Year and Other Measures) Bill 2023
[Provisions]**

To the Committee Secretary,

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Education Legislation Amendment (Startup Year and Other Measures) Bill 2023.

RUN is a national collaborative group of seven regional Australian universities: Charles Sturt University, CQUniversity Australia, Federation University Australia, Southern Cross University, University of New England, University of Southern Queensland, and the University of the Sunshine Coast.

This submission reflects the positions of RUN institutions, and in doing so, also aims to represent the views of the communities which RUN universities serve; the one-third of Australians who live outside of metropolitan centres in regional, rural and remote locations.

RUN welcomes the changes the Government has made based on previous sectoral consultation and are supportive of the submission made by Universities Australia.

Program funding

RUN remains concerned that universities with existing accelerators will be able to participate in the Startup Year program however, universities that do not have existing accelerators will be unable to partake in the program. The funding of the program is such that universities who do not have accelerators will be unable to utilise this program or use the funding to establish their own accelerators. The funding facilitates students enrolling in courses, but this approach does not provide sufficient funding to facilitate regional university investment into accelerators with lower student numbers. There is currently no incentive for smaller regional universities to extend or update their offerings or to offer for the first time.

Consideration should be given to strategies enabling regional universities to work together to provide the best learning experience for regional students. This may include regional partnership, virtual hubs, dual delivery of a program, and/or digital and blended learning opportunities that could lead to greater collaboration between participants and industries.

As it currently stands, the Startup Year initiative creates additional educational attainment issues for students from regional Australia where institutions are less likely to have the requisite existing infrastructure. Regional students are therefore more likely to miss out on the educational outcomes of the Startup Year program.

Establishment of a working group

RUN agrees with the recommendation put forward by Universities Australia that during the twelve-month pilot, an expert working group be formed to provide advice on how best to achieve the project's outcomes as well as ensuring that a thorough and robust consultative review is conducted upon completion of the pilot year.

Please do not hesitate to contact the RUN Secretariat on 0408 482 736 or via e-mail at execdir@run.edu.au to discuss any elements of the submission further.

Kind regards,



Alec Webb
Executive Director, RUN