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## MYEFO CUTS UNDULY HIT REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

The cuts outlined in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) disproportionately impact Australia's regional universities and regional communities.

The \$56.3 million in savings by ceasing the Regional Research Collaboration Program represents over 50 per cent of the total savings from the Department of Education portfolio and will significantly impact Australia's regional universities and regional Australia.

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) is disappointed at the \$46.2 million cut to Australia's Economic Accelerator program, a program designed to support the translation and commercialisation of Australia's university research.

Regional Australia was also subject to the \$1.2 million in savings sought from the Destination Australia program which funds scholarships to domestic and international students to study and live in regional Australia.

Executive Director of RUN, Alec Webb said the undermining of programs targeted to increase capability in Australia's regions is a retrograde step in providing opportunities to all Australians and runs counter to the intent of other higher education policy initiatives.

"The cessation of the Regional Research Collaboration Program which was linking universities with regional businesses to solve real world challenges while building workforce capability is a dark day for regional Australia.

"Projects funded under the Regional Research Collaboration Program were addressing the needs of regional Australia, creating more resilient local economies and communities, and enabling regional Australians to reach their full potential," said Mr Webb.

The Destination Australia program was actively supporting students from Australia and overseas to undertake their studies and to experience life in regional and remote Australia. The program also provided scholarships to domestic students from underrepresented cohorts to enable them to access tertiary education in regional Australia.

"Cutting the Destination Australia program runs directly opposite to the goals of the Australian Universities Accord which explicitly states that Australia needs to grow skills through greater equity.

"Reducing investment in and opportunities for regional universities, regional communities and regional citizens is not the way to drive great equity and educational attainment.

"Investment in regional Australia is an investment for the entire nation, and the multiplying effect of regional investment transforms communities, creates opportunities, and increases Australia's prosperity." said Mr Webb.

### For media enquiries:

Alec Webb, Executive Director, 0408 482 736

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