



Submission from the Regional Universities Network on the Higher Education on the

HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT AMENDMENT (COST RECOVERY) BILL 2018

HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT (CHARGES) BILL 2018

The Regional Universities Network (RUN), a group of six regionally headquartered universities (www.run.edu.au), opposes the imposition of an annual charge for student loans on regional universities, as proposed in the Higher Education Support Amendment (Cost Recovery) Bill 2018 and the Higher Education Support (Charges) Bill 2018.

The relatively higher reliance of regional universities on Government funding, compared to the larger, metropolitan universities, and the location of relevant campuses in areas of growing demand for higher education, has meant that members of the RUN group have been disproportionately, negatively impacted by the freeze in Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding under the 2017 Mid-Year Economic and Financial Statement.

Any annual charge relating to student loans is yet another financial imposition on us.

We have a mission to raise higher education participation in communities with relative low university attainment rates, where the majority of students are from regional or low SES backgrounds, are mature age and first in family to go to university. Consequently, a significant proportion of our funding goes towards outreach activities, aspiration raising, and support for student success.

Around 70 per cent of our graduates work in regional Australia, increasing productivity and keeping young people in the regions.

As anchor institutions for our communities, regional universities broadly contribute in a myriad of ways to the economic, social and cultural development of regions. We do not get regional development funding for this role, and must draw on our base funding for many relevant activities. The annual charge relating to student loans will take funding away from important activities that our universities undertake in the regions.