

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12  
15 February 2012

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

**TOPIC:** Regional Universities

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator McKenzie

**QUESTION No.:** AI-42

What support does the department provide specifically for regional university campuses?

**ANSWER**

*Regional loading for universities*

The regional loading for universities helps overcome the higher costs of regional campuses, compared to campuses in major cities. It provides additional funding to universities for Commonwealth supported students enrolled at regional campuses. The Government announced in the 2011-12 Budget that it would increase the regional loading by \$110 million over four years. Subject to changes in indexation rates, the total funding for regional loading from 2011-12 to 2014-15 will be \$249 million. The additional regional loading funding and new formula started on 1 January 2012.

*Regional Priorities Round of the Education Investment Fund*

The Regional Priorities Round of the Education Investment Fund (EIF) will allocate up to \$500 million in funding to higher education institutions and vocational education and training (VET) providers to support students in regional Australia. There are two components to the Regional Priorities Round:

- \$480 million will be allocated to teaching and learning infrastructure projects that support students located in regional, rural and remote Australia and/or regional cities (such as Hobart, Darwin, Newcastle, Wollongong and Geelong) through a two-stage, competitive funding round.
  - On 7 October 2011, the Prime Minister opened the competitive Regional Priorities Round and called for Expressions of Interest. Expressions of Interest were considered by the independent EIF Advisory Board who provided advice to the Tertiary Education Minister.
  - On 27 February 2012, applicants that were successful at the Expression of Interest stage were invited to submit detailed Stage 2 applications.
  - It is expected that 40 organisations will be submitting Stage 2 applications, of which 13 are from universities and 27 from VET providers. A list of the 13 universities is at **Attachment A**.
  
- \$20 million in seed funding will be allocated for the development of a multi-partner university campus on the mid-north coast of New South Wales.

- On 19 December 2011, Senator Evans announced that a consortium led by the University of New South Wales was the successful applicant for this funding, for the development of a health facility in Port Macquarie. This project was assessed against the EIF evaluation criteria by the independent EIF Advisory Board.

#### *Structural Adjustment Fund (SAF)*

On 7 December 2011 the Australian Government announced 11 successful SAF projects, in addition to two projects previously announced. Total funding for the 13 SAF projects is \$377 million.

Of this, a total of \$292 million has been allocated to 9 regional universities.

SAF projects will assist universities to prepare for the new operational requirements of a demand driven funding system with new quality measures in place. The Government has recognised that these challenges are likely to be particularly acute for universities serving regional and outer metropolitan areas – and the SAF program outcomes reflect this.

#### *Collaborative Research Networks*

The Collaborative Research Networks (CRN) program is a structural adjustment package assisting eligible less research-intensive smaller and regional universities adapt to a research system driven more strongly by performance outcomes.

On 31 May 2011, Minister Carr announced twelve higher education institutions would receive a total of \$61.5 million from mid 2011 to mid 2014 under the CRN program to build research capacity through partnering with other institutions in areas of common interest.

#### *Other support*

The programs described above provide support specifically for regional university campuses. However, most of the funding for regional campuses comes from general programs that support all campuses such as the Commonwealth Grant Scheme, Research Block Grants, Performance Funding, the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program and past rounds of the Education Investment Fund

**Attachment A**

<b>Regional Priorities Round – applicants invited to participate in Stage 2</b>	
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
<b>Higher Education Sector</b>	
University of New England	Integrated Agricultural Education Project
University of the Sunshine Coast	USC Engineering Learning Hub
The University of Newcastle	Building Access and Attainment in the Hunter Region
James Cook University	The Science Place (TSP) for northern Queensland
University of Wollongong	Early Start – Changing Childrens' Futures
Bond University	School of Allied Health
Griffith University	The Gold Coast Centre for Healthy Futures (CHF)
Southern Cross University	Engineering and Science @ SCU: expanding choice & opportunities for students in regional NSW
Deakin University	CADET-Centre for Advanced Design in Engineering Training
Charles Sturt University	Growing Participation and Skills in Rural, Regional and Remote Health
Curtin University	Expanding and modernising teaching and laboratory facilities at Curtin WASM Kalgoorlie
University of Tasmania	Creative Futures Tasmania
University of South Australia	Regional Connections – UniSa's Centre for Regional Engagement (Mt Gambier & Whyalla)