

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Country Universities Centre welcomes funding to encourage more people from the regions to go to university

The [Country Universities Centre](#) (CUC) has welcomed the announcement from Minister for Regional Education Bridget McKenzie on funding the Eastern Australia Regional University Centre Partnership to nurture the aspirations of young people in regional communities to go to university.

The Eastern Australia Regional University Centre Partnership is a collaboration of 25 universities and 16 Regional University Centres across Queensland, NSW, ACT and Victoria led by the CUC and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

The Project will utilise the Commonwealth funding to work on a coordinated, community-led approach to widening university participation and school outreach, partnering with local communities to codesign innovative programs that address their unique community challenges in nurturing local aspiration and supporting access to higher education.

The CUC Equity and Engagement Director, Chris Ronan, is excited to see the project come to life.

“Previous outreach and widening participation initiatives from universities were focused on delivering services to schools, without any understanding of the local context. With the funding provided by the Commonwealth, this refreshing project will develop programs that are designed by the community for the community and respects their local knowledge, while still drawing on the existing experience and knowledge of universities.”

Lead university UTS’s Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Justice & Inclusion) Verity Firth said she is excited to be working in partnership with local communities, Regional University Centres and other universities to break down barriers to tertiary education in these communities.

“Young people growing up in rural and remote communities face far more barriers to getting a university education than those in the city or in large regional centres that have universities in their backyard.

“We want more of these talented rural and remote community members to go to university. However, that requires us as universities to listen to communities and understand what their challenges are so that we can work together to co-design outreach programs that are going to work.”

This new approach enabled through the Commonwealth draws on substantial research from Australian university student equity practitioners and places local communities at the centre of the design and implementation of all school outreach and widening participation activities.

The Eastern Australia Regional University Centre Partnership is funded under the Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program (RPPPP).

University Partners

University of Technology Sydney (Co-Lead Partner)	Macquarie University
Australian Catholic University	Southern Cross University
CQUniversity	Western Sydney University
Griffith University	University of Wollongong
James Cook University	University of Canberra
Queensland University of Technology	University of Sydney
The University of Queensland	The University of Notre Dame
University of Southern Queensland	Charles Sturt University
University of the Sunshine Coast	University of New South Wales
RMIT	University of New England
Deakin University	Federation University
Swinburne University	Australian National University
Monash University	

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