

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON JOBS FOR THE FUTURE IN REGIONAL AREAS

September 2019

Universities Australia (UA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Select Committee's inquiry into jobs for the future in regional areas.

UA is the peak body for Australia's 39 comprehensive universities. Our members are spread across Australia, in both regional and metropolitan areas. They educate more than a million students each year and undertake research that adds to Australia's stock of knowledge.

Not as often discussed, universities also have a significant role to play in civic society in their local community and provide important elements of the industrial structure. In many regions they are a major employer and play a key role in the facilitation of jobs and economic growth. Indeed, universities contribute over \$2 billion to regional economies each year, and sustain over 14,000 regional jobs.

DISCUSSION

EDUCATING THE CURRENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE

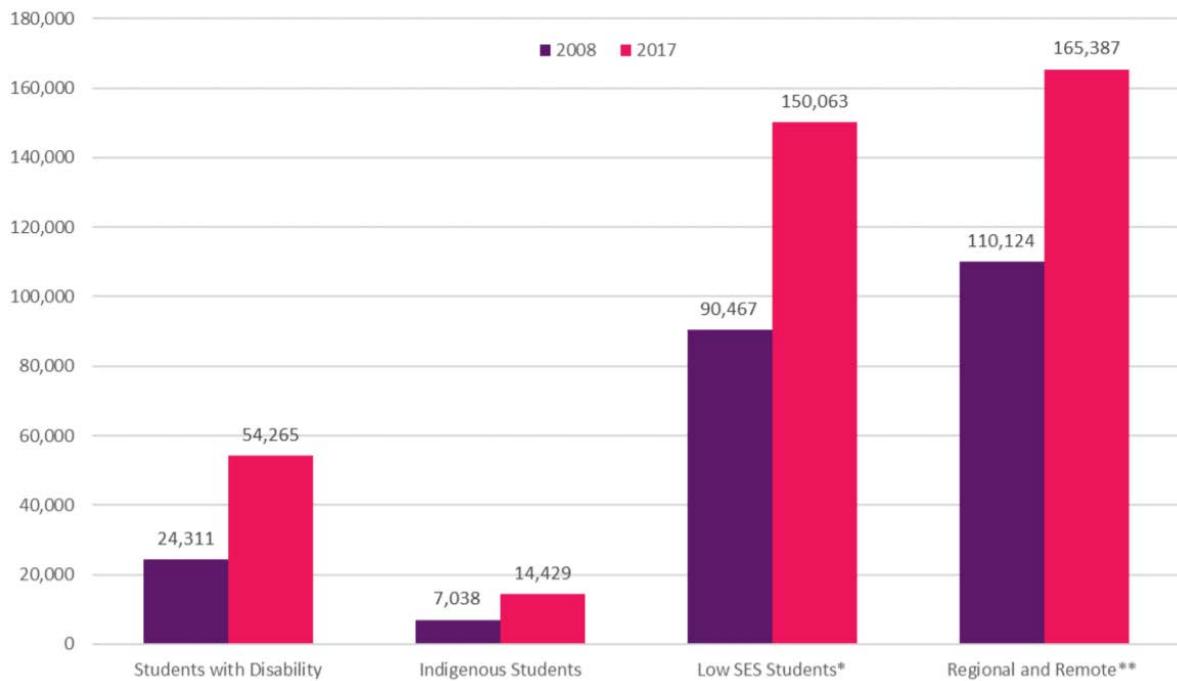
Universities are core drivers of skilling the future workforce and, increasingly, in helping workers to up-skill and re-skill as part of the structural transition taking place in the economy.

The uncapped funding system led to an increase in the participation of undergraduate equity groups, including Indigenous students, students with a disability, and students from low socio-economic backgrounds and regional and remote areas (see chart below). Enrolments of undergraduate students from regional and remote areas increased 50 per cent between 2008 and 2017 (Figure 1). However, there remains a disparity between metropolitan and regional, rural and remote (RRR) students in terms of overall attainment (Figure 2).

Although completion rates for regional, rural and remote students are below those for students residing in metropolitan areas, RRR students who do complete tertiary study have better employment outcomes than their metropolitan counterparts.¹ Of course, meaningful opportunities within the regions themselves can be a barrier to retaining graduates in their local communities. Long-term Government investment in regional infrastructure would be a solution to keeping skilled graduates in the regions, as well as supporting the economic and social ecosystem of the communities.

¹ Commonwealth of Australia (2019), National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy. Final Report.

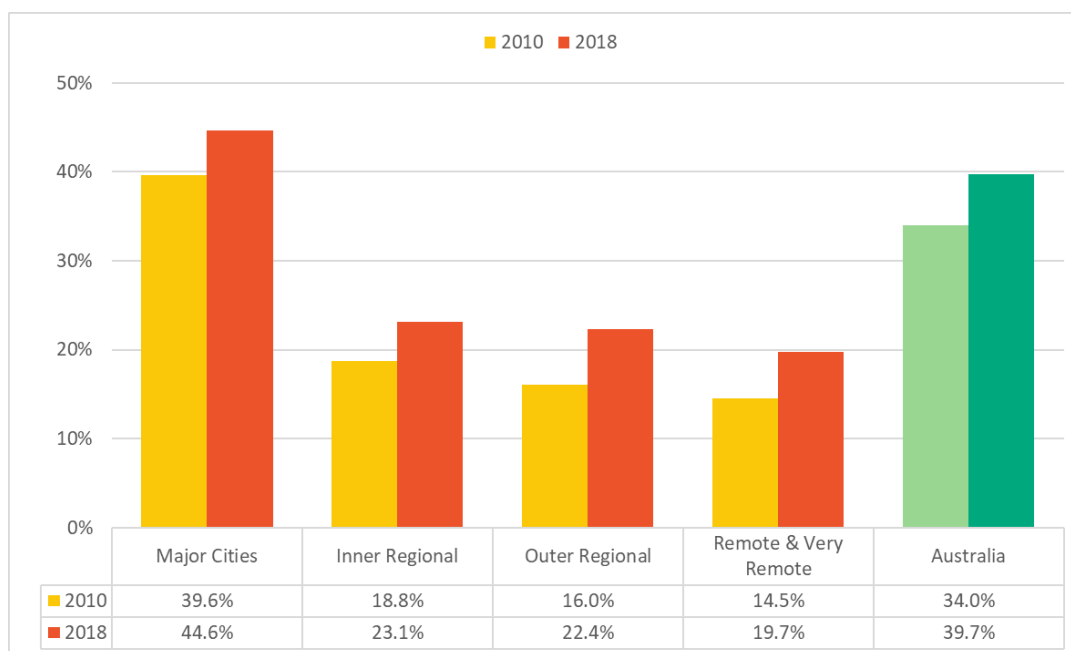
Figure 1. Change in enrolment of undergraduate students between 2008 and 2017 for select cohorts



Source: Universities Australia, Key Fact and Figures (2019).

Note: *denotes low SES definition changed from 2006 SEIFA to 2016 SEIFA from 2016. ** denotes regional and remote student definition changed from 2006 MCEETYA to 2016 ASGS in 2016

Figure 2: Proportion of people aged 25–34 years old with a Bachelor degree or higher, by degree of remoteness



Source: Universities Australia, Key Fact and Figures (2019); ABS, *Education and Work, Australia*, Cat. No. 6227.0, various years.

Engaging with industry to facilitate the transition from education to work

The transition from education to work has always been challenging for graduates. However, the Government's annual survey of university graduates — the largest of its kind — confirms that within four months 70 per cent of graduates are in full-time employment, and this rises to 90 per cent three years after graduation.

A practical way of ensuring that students have work relevant skills is through work integrated learning (WIL). In our *Career Ready Graduates* report, UA found that almost half a million students at Australia's universities had a formal work placement, industry or workplace experience in 2017.²

Since 2015, the expansion of these WIL opportunities has occurred under a concerted national strategy. The partners in this work include Universities Australia, the Australian Collaborative Education Network, the Australian Industry Group, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Business Council of Australia, the Commonwealth Department of Education, and the Office of the Chief Scientist.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE STARTUP ECONOMY

In our *Startup Smarts: Universities and the Startup Economy* report, UA cites data that shows that startups are the largest contributor to job creation in Australia.³ From 2004 to 2011, they created more than 1.2 million new jobs.⁴ This represented 90 per cent of net positive job creation (820,000 new jobs) over the same period. Startups also contributed \$164 billion to the Australian economy between 2004 and 2011, or nearly 40 per cent of the value added to the economy in those years. In 2013, universities, medical research institutes and publicly funded research agencies had equity holdings in 180 startups.⁵

At some universities, up to 40 per cent of students and recent alumni have either founded their own startup or are considering doing so.

In 2016, 84.4 per cent of startup founders had a university qualification. The report by Startup Muster⁶ on Australia's start-up ecosystem found the following education attainment characteristics of founders:

- Of those founders that attended university, 70.5 per cent obtained their qualification from an Australian university, with the remaining 29.5 per cent having gone to university in another country;
- 5.8 per cent of founders had a vocational qualification as their highest level of education; and
- 9.8 per cent had a high school education as their highest qualification.

Universities are answering the call to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to create their own job, their own company—and even their own new industries.

Many more students are choosing courses in entrepreneurship, then taking what they've learnt straight into a university incubator or accelerator program to develop a startup company.

In their 2016 book *The Smartest Places on Earth*, authors Antoine van Agtmael and Fred Bakker describe the crucial role of universities in establishing new startup companies and breathing life into many former rustbelt regional economies around the world.

² Universities Australia (2018), [Career Ready Graduates](#).

³ Universities Australia (2017), [Startup smarts: Universities and the startup economy](#).

⁴ Australian Government 2016, Australian Innovation System Report 2016, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Office of the Chief Economist, Canberra.

⁵ Universities Australia (2017), [Startup smarts: Universities and the startup economy](#).

⁶ Startup Muster is an Australian company founded in 2013 with the goal of measuring and publishing the progress, challenges and opportunities within the Australian start-up ecosystem. For the report and detailed survey methodology, refer to <https://www.startupmuster.com/reports>.

This trend is also alive in Australia, as illustrated by the case study below for regional NSW.

Case study – 365 cups

Charles Sturt University graduates Simone Eyles and Mariusz Stankiewicz founded 365 cups—a mobile app that allows people to skip the queue and preorder their coffee.

Both were the first in their families to graduate with university qualifications—Simone in graphic design and Mariusz in information technology.

To date, over one million orders have been placed using the app. The company now employs a number of people in Mariusz and Simone’s hometown in regional Australia in Wagga Wagga. They’re also using the app to power smart ordering platforms around the world. They’ve also recently entered the US market with a major retail contract.

Universities across Australia have a variety of startup programs to help incubate and foster the talents of students in creating their own startups. See Appendix A for an illustrative list.

UNIVERSITIES, BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT WORKING TO CREATE JOBS AND GROWTH

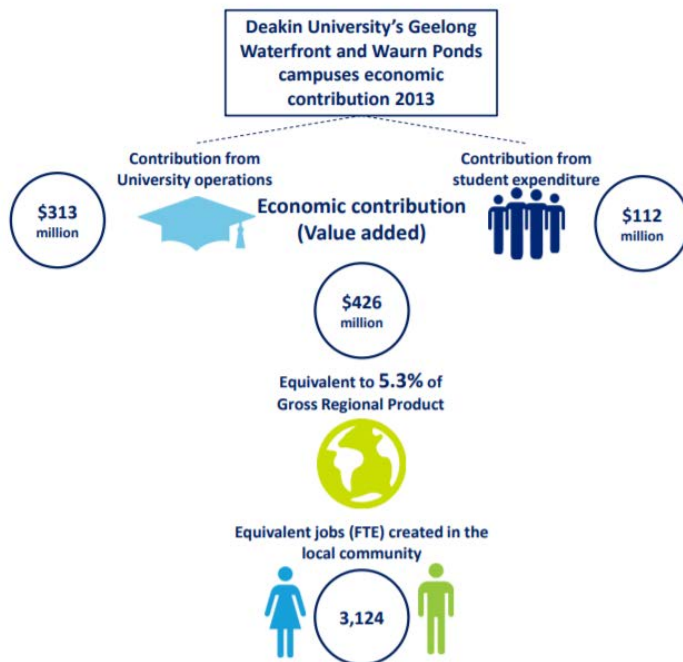
Universities in regional communities can act as a focal point for civic and business activity, as well as being major employers themselves.

One study found that in 2015, CQUniversity, Federation University, Southern Cross University, University of New England, University of Southern Queensland and the University of the Sunshine Coast together delivered an additional \$1.7 billion to their communities through jobs and productivity, student and university spending and research outcomes.⁷

A specific example of this economic contribution at a local level is illustrated in the Deloitte Access Economics [study](#) of the economic impact of Deakin University’s Geelong Waurn Ponds and Waterfront campuses (see figure below).⁸

⁷ Nous (2017). The economic impact of the Regional Universities Network. Report prepared for RUN.

⁸ Deloitte Access Economics (2014), Economic contribution of Deakin University’s Geelong Waurn Ponds and Waterfront campuses.



The total economic contribution of the Geelong campuses' ongoing operations and the expenditure of Deakin students to the local community in 2013 was \$426 million of value added, which is 5.3 per cent of the local economy or 3,124 full-time equivalent jobs. The Geelong campuses directly employed 1,539 people (FTE).

Another example is James Cook University, which is primarily located in Townsville and Cairns. An independent study estimated that its economic impact to the Queensland economy in 2016 alone was \$827 million.⁹

CONCLUSION

Universities have always contributed to the training of the current and future workforce and continue to do so. They are one of the primary means of bridging inequality and helping to raise the aspirations and ultimately the standard of living for Australians.

⁹ Western Research Institute (2018). James Cook University economic and human capital impact. Report prepared for JCU.

APPENDIX A**UNIVERSITY STARTUP SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

Source: Universities Australia (2017), [Startup smarts: Universities and the startup economy](#).

UNIVERSITY STARTUP SUPPORT PROGRAMS

University	Kind of support	Name of program	Website
Australian Catholic University	Accelerator startup support co-working space	ACU Collaborate Plus	www.acu.edu.au
The Australian National University	Other startup support	CBR Innovation Network (Foundation member)	cbrin.com.au
	Pre-Accelerator	Innovation ACT	www.innovationact.org
	Incubator	Cicada Innovations (co-owner)	cicadainnovations.com
	Co-working space	Entry29	entry29.org.au
Bond University	Accelerator	Bond Business Accelerator	bond.edu.au
CQUniversity	Startup partnership	Split Spaces	www.cqu.edu.au
	Incubator	Social Innovation Studio (Gladstone)	www.cqu.edu.au
	Startup partnership and event	3 Day Startup (3DS)	www.cqu.edu.au
Charles Darwin University	Incubator	Darwin Innovation Hub	In development
Charles Sturt University	Other startup support	Digital Showcase and Start Up Hub (Bathurst)	In development
	Other startup support	Indigenous Entrepreneurship Pop Up Innovation Hub (Albury, Dubbo, Lismore, Port Macquarie)	In development
	Incubator	AgriTech Incubator Hub (Wagga)	In development
Curtin University	Accelerator	Curtin Accelerate	research.curtin.edu.au
	Innovation centre	Cisco Internet of Everything Innovation Centre	research.curtin.edu.au
	Seed funding	Curtin Kickstart	research.curtin.edu.au
	Innovator in residence	Professor Bill Tai	research.curtin.edu.au
	Startup competition	OzAPP Awards	ozapp.com.au
Deakin University	Incubator	SPARK@Deakin	spark.deakin.edu.au
	Incubator	ManuFutures	In development www.deakin.edu.au
Edith Cowan University	Coworking space	Sixty27	www.sixty27.com.au
	Incubator	ECUBIC	www.ecu.edu.au
	Other startup support	THE LINK at ECU	thelink.space
	Masterclasses	ECU Watermark GetLINKED! Series	www.ecu.edu.au
	Student enterprise	ENACTUS ECU	enactusecu.org
	Co-working space	The Hybrid 935	www.thehybrid935.space
	Accelerator	ON Program	oninnovation.com.au
Federation University	Incubator	Greenhill Enterprise Centre (GEC)	btp.federation.edu.au
Flinders University	Accelerator	Venture Dorm	www.nviflinders.com.au
	Accelerator	Flinders Innovation Centre	www.nviflinders.com.au
	Incubator and co-working space	eNVision	www.nviflinders.com.au
	Other startup support	INNO program	www.nviflinders.com.au
	Other startup support	Flinders Enterprise Consulting	www.nviflinders.com.au
Griffith University	Student hatchery	Studio 39	www.griffith.edu.au

University	Kind of support	Name of program	Website
James Cook University	Innovation centre	Cairns Innovation Centre	www.jcu.edu.au
	Innovation precinct	Technology Innovation Complex	In development
	Innovator in residence	Entrepreneur-in-Residence program (InnovationNQ)	www.jcu.edu.au
	Other startup support	Festival of Ideas master classes	www.festivalofideas.com.au
	Other startup support	Design and Build Centre	In development
La Trobe University	Innovation centre	Centre for Technology Infusion	www.latrobe.edu.au
	Accelerator	La Trobe Accelerator Program (LTAP)	In development
Macquarie University	Incubator	Macquarie University Incubator	In development mq.edu.au/incubator
	Innovation precinct	Macquarie Park Innovation District	mpid.com.au
Murdoch University	Other startup support	Start Something program	media.murdoch.edu.au
Monash University	Incubator	Incubate	incubate.org.au
	Startup support	The Generator	entrepreneurship.apps.monash.edu
Queensland University of Technology	Accelerator	QUTCEA – Fashion Accelerator	qutcea.com
	Coworking space	The Coterie	qutcea.com
	Accelerator	Creative Tech	In development
	Seed funding	Creative Startup Fund	qutcea.com
	Startup event	Creative3 forum	creative3.com.au
	Incubator	CEA Business Hub	qutcea.com
	Startup event	Creative Tech Startup Weekend	www.up.co
	Competition	QUT bluebox Innovation Challenge	www.qutbluebox.com.au
	Accelerator	QUT bluebox accelerator program	www.qutbluebox.com.au
	Coworking space	QUT Foundry	In development
Other startup support	QUT Founders Fund	In development	
RMIT University	Incubator accelerator and co-working space	RMIT Activator	www.rmitactivator.edu.au
	Other startup support	Research Innovation & Entrepreneurship branch	www1.rmit.edu.au
Southern Cross University	Other startup support	Southern Cross Enterprise Lab	In development (contact: enterpriselab@scu.edu.au)
Swinburne University of Technology	Innovation precinct and incubator	Swinburne Innovation Precinct	www.swinburne.edu.au
The University of Adelaide	Incubator	ThincLab Business Incubator	www.ecic.adelaide.edu.au
	Innovation Hub	ThincLab Adelaide	www.ecic.adelaide.edu.au
University of Canberra	Co-working space	Entry29	entry29.org.au
	Other startup support	CBR Innovation Network (Foundation member)	cbrin.com.au
	Accelerator	Social Enterprise Accelerator (The Mill House)	In development
The University of Melbourne	Accelerator	Melbourne University Accelerator	themap.co
	Coworking space	Carlton Connect	www.carltonconnect.com.au
	Student program	The Wade Institute (Masters of Entrepreneurship)	wadeinstitute.org.au
The University of New England	Incubator	SMART Region Incubator	www.une.edu.au
UNSW, Sydney	Innovation centre	Michael Crouch Innovation Centre (MCIC)	www.mcic.unsw.edu.au
	Other startup support	Student Entrepreneurship	www.innovations.unsw.edu.au

University	Kind of support	Name of program	Website
UNSW, Sydney	Incubator	Torch Prototype Incubator	www.mcic.unsw.edu.au
	Innovation precinct	Torch Innovation Precinct	www.torch.unsw.edu.au
University of Newcastle	Innovation centre	Newcastle Innovation	newcastleinnovation.com.au
	Innovation Network	Integrated Innovation Network	www.newcastle.edu.au
	Hub and co-working space	Three76 Hub	www.newcastle.edu.au
	Pre-accelerator	Star4000	www.newcastle.edu.au
The University of Queensland	Accelerator	iLab	www.ilabaccelerator.com
	Incubator	Idea Hub	ideahub.uq.edu.au
University of Southern Queensland	Event	AgInnovate	www.usq.edu.au
The University of Sydney	Incubator	Incubate	incubate.org.au
The University of Tasmania	Innovation centres	Tas-i Entrepreneurship & Incubator hubs	In development
University of Technology Sydney	Incubator	The Hatchery	hatchery.uts.edu.au
	Innovation centre	Innovation and Creative Intelligence Unit	www.uts.edu.au
	Accelerator	Hatchery +	hatchery.uts.edu.au
	Incubator	Deep Green Biotech Hub	deepgreenhub.uts.edu.au
UniSA	Incubator and innovation centre	The Innovation Collaboration Centre	icc.unisa.edu.au
	Accelerator	The Venture Catalyst	icc.unisa.edu.au
	Accelerator	Centre for Business Growth	centreforbusinessgrowth.com
	Commercialisation and spinout support, investment management	UniSA Ventures	www.itek.com.au
University of the Sunshine Coast	Innovation centre & coworking space	Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast	innovationcentre.com.au
	Accelerator	Grow Coastal: food&beverage accelerator program	innovationcentre.com.au
	Other startup support	Pitch Competition & DemoDay events	innovationcentre.com.au
	Other startup support	Startup Weekend Sunshine Coast	www.up.co
	Accelerator	Health Accelerator Program	In development
	Other startup support	Innovation Education Program	In development
The University of Western Australia	Innovation Centre	UWA Innovation Quarter	www.innovation.uwa.edu.au
	Pre-accelerator	Start Something	www.innovation.uwa.edu.au
	Innovation Education	Innovation and Startup Unit	handbooks.uwa.edu.au
	Innovation Education	Masters in biotech commercialisation	handbooks.uwa.edu.au
	Technology Transfer Unit	Research Development and Innovation—Commercialisation	www.rdi.uwa.edu.au
	Co-working space	Masonic Hall	In development
	Maker space	UWA Makers	www.facebook.com
The University of Western Australia/ St Catherine's College	Innovation centre	BloomLab	www.stcatherines.uwa.edu.au
	Co-working space and incubator	Bloom	www.bloom.org.au
	Innovation Education	Bloom Start-Up LaunchPad	www.bloom.org.au
Curtin, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch, Notre Dame and UWA	Research and Industry Innovation Program	iPrep	www.waresearch.com
University of Wollongong	Accelerator	iAccelerate	www.iaccelerate.com.au
Victoria University	Entrepreneur in residence, other startup support	The VU Hanger	www.vuhanger.com
Western Sydney University	Innovation centres	Launch Pad	www.westernsydney.edu.au