

National Priorities and Industry Linkages Fund CUC submission to consultation paper

Key Points:

- 1) The NPILF program should encourage collaborations between universities and industry in regional and remote areas.
- 2) These programs should ensure that WIL, STEM, or research initiatives are available to students who are studying online in regional and remote areas.
- 3) The Regional Universities Centres may be an effective resource to facilitate collaborations in regional and remote areas.

The Country Universities Centre (CUC) operates a network of Regional University Centres (RUC) across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. In 2020, we supported over 900 students studying through 35 Australian Universities and 24 non-university higher education providers. Our students studied over 400 different degrees, including undergraduate degrees, post-graduate research and coursework and tertiary pathways.

The CUC supports the Commonwealth Government National Priorities and Industry Linkages Fund to encourage closer collaboration between universities and industry. We believe that the initiative will provide depth to student learning, as well as increase the understanding of the needs of industry by universities, and potential to advance practical research in Australia.

The CUC urges the consultation committee to incentivise and encourage industry and university collaborations in regional and remote areas, and to ensure that these programs are available to students who are studying online in regional and remote areas.

The Regional University Centres (RUC) program may be an effective mechanism to expand the reach of university/industry partnerships in regional and remote areas, particularly to engage with local small and medium- size enterprises (SMEs). All RUCs are community owned and operated and are closely engaged with local industry and organisations such as health services. These excellent local connections mean that the RUCs are well placed to facilitate opportunities between universities and local SME's. It is also an opportunity to "think outside of the lab" and access local community initiatives such as local bushfire recovery projects and to connect areas of need in local research in regional and remote areas.