



## **SENATOR THE HON NIGEL SCULLION**

Interim Parliamentary Leader of the Nationals  
Minister for Indigenous Affairs  
Senator for the Northern Territory

## **SENATOR THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM**

Minister for Education and Training  
Senator for South Australia

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Regional and rural students get head start in STEM**

Applications open today for a new program to make access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) easier for 1200 students living in regional and remote areas of Australia.

Interim Parliamentary Leader of the Nationals Nigel Scullion said all Australians deserve to have quality education and training opportunities, no matter where they live.

“For the first time, 1200 regional and rural students will be offered dedicated scholarships of up to \$18,000, made possible by a \$24 million investment by the Liberal National Government that we committed to at the last election,” Minister Scullion said.

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These scholarships are about making student life easier for regional and rural Australians and making STEM courses more attractive study options,” Minister Scullion said.

“The program has been designed to suit the needs of rural and regional students and will support flexible arrangements, including part-time and online study

“We’re also supporting the participation of rural women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in STEM, among others, by prioritising them through the scholarship selection process.

“We understand the obstacles many regional and rural Australians face in accessing higher education and we’re taking action to deliver practical solutions.”

Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham said science and innovation were recognised internationally as critical for boosting productivity, creating new jobs, enhancing competitiveness and driving economic growth.

“As well as tackling some of the hurdles regional and rural students face, these scholarships will help boost their numbers in STEM courses where they have been underrepresented.

“In 2015, 25.8 per cent of 15-64 year olds lived in regional and remote areas, but represented only 19.3 per cent of STEM enrolments.

“Ultimately this program will help improve educational attainment, skills development, and employment opportunities for regional and remote students.

“Importantly, the scholarships may include an internship to help students develop their professional experience and ensure they’re job-ready.”

The scholarships will operate from 2017-18 to 2020-21, with the first round of 600 scholarships being awarded for the 2018 academic year, and a second round of 600 for 2019.

The first round of applications opens today and closes on 8 January 2018. Scholarship applications for the 2019 academic year will open in the second half of 2018.

Prospective vocational education, undergraduate and postgraduate students (Certificate IV to PhD) are eligible to apply for a Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarship to support them in their studies in the year ahead.

For further information and to apply visit the [Department of Education and Training website](#).

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