MEDIA RELEASE

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REGIONAL AUSTRALIA MUST BE PART OF INNOVATION PRECINCTS

Regional universities are ideally placed to play an important role in the Federal Government's planned Innovation Precincts, according to the Regional Universities Network.

Building industry-university collaboration in research remains an ongoing challenge in Australia. Innovation precincts as proposed in the Government's A Plan for Australian Jobs released on February 17 provide a model which draws on collaboration between various players to consolidate industry-relevant research and innovation and drive productivity and growth.

The Chair of the Regional Universities Network (RUN), Professor David Battersby, said that he hoped regional Australia would participate fully in the innovation precincts.

"Regional Australia has much to gain by building on industry-university research partnerships in key industries," Professor Battersby said.

"Some of RUN's universities already host innovation and business centres and have close relationships with local industry.

"The Government has noted in its statement that industry around the country, including in regional locations, will be able to benefit from precinct activities through a national information technology platform, the Industry Innovation Network. This will enable business and researchers to take part in precinct activities regardless of their location."

Involvement of industry relevant PhDs in the precincts via funding from the Australian Research Council's Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP) will help build the links between industry and the universities.

"RUN hopes that the $1 billion cut to the research and development tax concession for some of the nation's largest companies won't adversely impact on their investment in research," Professor Battersby said.