

**28 FEBRUARY 2013**

## **RUN STRONGLY ENDORSES UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA POLICY STATEMENT**

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) strongly endorses the Universities Australia policy statement, *A Smarter Australia*, released on February 27.

The Chair of RUN, Professor David Battersby, welcomed the vision for the university sector provided in the statement and the key role universities play in the nation.

Professor Battersby said RUN supported all of the key tenets of the UA statement.

"The statement clearly articulates the unique role of regional universities," Professor Battersby said.

"It recognises that universities are an important and prominent feature, and often the focal point, of regional and outer urban communities. They make a substantial contribution to the local economy, and, in many places, the university is the largest employer. They typically provide a comprehensive range of course to local people, including school leavers, mature age students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students from low SES backgrounds.

"Further, the UA policy statement recognises that regional universities mitigate the long-term loss of talented young people from the region, and in doing so play a major role in regional development and in securing the economic wellbeing of the communities they serve. Universities introduce innovation and thus increased productivity to their local economy, and are the conduits of research benefitting local and regional industries and other enterprises.

"RUN's policy statement, which will be released in the next few weeks, will build on some of these themes and will be complementary to the Universities Australia document.

"UA Chair Professor Glyn Davis called for an ongoing public conversation on the role of universities and RUN will play an active role in this throughout 2013."

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