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## **REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES MUST CONTINUE TO GROW STRATEGIC RESEARCH**

The Regional Universities Network has defended the integral role of research in maintaining comprehensive, high-quality higher education in the regions.

Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training, The Hon Christopher Pyne MP, stated in a speech at Monash University yesterday (April 30) that government policy should encourage some universities to maximise their opportunities for research and others to focus on teaching.

RUN Chair Professor David Battersby said regional universities must continue as comprehensive teaching, learning and research institutions.

“RUN universities excel in teaching students from diverse backgrounds for the benefit of our communities and the nation. But research is also a key part of being a university, and, without this activity, many benefits would be lost to regional Australia,” Professor Battersby said.

“Research at RUN universities attracts quality academics, builds institutional quality and capacity, including in teaching and learning, is essential for the training of research students, creates a pool of research-trained professionals, and supports and contributes to regional industries and commercial activities.

“Results from the Excellence in Research for Australia 2012 assessment exercise show that RUN universities undertake research of well above, above and at world standard in a range of fields of strategic importance. These include geochemistry, forestry sciences, crop and pasture production, agriculture and land management, mathematics, zoology, biological sciences, law, policy and administration, health and clinical sciences and human movement.

“RUN universities are relatively young and the research effort is growing significantly. Research funding in regional universities is very focussed, highly productive in its outcomes and yields a high return.

“Our universities are committed to growing our research effort in strategic ways which contribute to our communities and the nation,” Professor Battersby said.

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