

29 OCTOBER 2013

REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The growing importance of regional universities to national prosperity will be highlighted at a two-day conference to be held at the campus of Southern Cross University in Coolangatta next month.

Organised by the Regional Universities Network (RUN) and Informa, the conference will focus on a range of issues confronting regional higher education, particularly its role in regional development and enhancing the economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of regional communities.

RUN Chair, Professor Peter Lee, said that issues would be viewed from both an Australian and international perspective.

"A spectrum of issues relevant to regional universities will be discussed. These include: the Australian higher education policy landscape, community engagement, developments in teaching and learning, alumni and fundraising, industry and research partnerships, and infrastructure," Professor Lee said.

"We are delighted to welcome Karen Andrews MP, Member for McPherson, Deputy Chair of the Coalition's Online Higher Education Working Group, who will speak about the role of regional universities and aspects of the Government's higher education policy.

"As well as a panel of the RUN Vice-Chancellors and many other presenters from RUN and other Australian universities, we have attracted top international speakers," Professor Lee said.

Fiona Larg, chief operating officer and secretary from the University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland, will discuss the regional university as an engine for economic, social and cultural transformation.

Professor Mario Polèse, senior adjunct professor at the School of Planning, McGill University, Montreal, will give a Canadian perspective on the local economic development impacts of regional universities.

AsiaEngage's executive director, Professor Dato' Dr Saran Kaur Gill, will also address the conference. Prof. Dato' Dr Saran, who is the National University of Malaysia's Deputy Vice Chancellor for Community and Industry Partnerships, believes regional university-community-industry engagement has the power to transform higher education and communities.

www.run.edu.au

“Universities play a unique and significant role as partners in the networks between stakeholders within regions that are crucial for resilient communities and economies,” Professor Lee said.

“The RUN-Informa Conference will provide a forum for robust discussion of opportunities facing regional universities

RUN-Informa Regional Higher Education Conference, 14-15 November. For the full program and registration see www.run.edu.au or [/www.informa.com.au/conferences/education-conference/regional-universities-forum/agenda](http://www.informa.com.au/conferences/education-conference/regional-universities-forum/agenda).

For media enquiries:

Dr Caroline Perkins, Executive Director, Regional Universities Network, 0408 482 736
Issued by: Diana Streak, RUN Media Adviser, 0422 536 064

www.run.edu.au