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RESEARCH VITAL TO REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES

The Regional Universities Network (RUN), responding to comments made by the Minister for Education, the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, that universities should be allowed to be teaching only, indicated its support for the current arrangements where universities must teach and undertake research.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Peter Lee, said that research was a vital part of being a university, and that RUN's universities are strongly committed to teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

"We are strategically engaged with research. Without this activity many benefits would be lost to regional Australia," Professor Lee said.

"Research at RUN institutions 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. It builds inter-regional, national and international knowledge and information networks.

"The impact of research undertaken by regional universities on the regions is significant. It contributes to regional productivity and innovation. The research is undertaken from a regional perspective which could not be achieved by a metropolitan based institution undertaking the same work.

"RUN universities are strategically growing their research effort. Results from Excellence in Research for Australia show that we undertake research of well above, above and at world standard in a range of fields of strategic importance to the regions including geochemistry, forestry, crop and pasture production, agriculture and land management, zoology, biological sciences, mathematics, law, policy and administration, health and clinical sciences and human movement," Professor Lee said.

"Our universities are relatively young and the research effort is increasing significantly. Funding invested in research will be highly productive, focussed and yield a high return."

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