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HUMPBACK WHALES AND BESSIE THE COW LEAD THE WAY IN RUN'S MATHS AND SCIENCE DIGITAL CLASSROOM

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) Maths and Science Digital Classroom was launched at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba today.

The Executive Director of RUN, Dr Caroline Perkins, said the project, funded under the Australian Government's Maths and Science Partnership Program, was a virtual space designed to inspire students to study maths and science.

"Via the Digital Classroom, Year 9&10 students will be able to explore the universe, swim with the whales, discover more about the human body, get involved in climate change, track Bessie the cow and make their own cheese!" Dr Perkins said.

"Understanding maths and science is crucial for a range of careers important to regional Australia, and, more broadly, the nation – for example health, engineering, teaching and business and science.

"Schools in regional Australia struggle to maintain equivalent educational standards in maths and science as compared to those in metropolitan areas. The RUN universities, together with our partners the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute, the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, are working to support students and teachers in the study of these subjects.

"The project is capturing the imagination of regional students through exciting and relevant case studies," Dr Perkins said.

"We hope that the classroom will make a difference to the understanding of maths and science by regional students. Perhaps it will inspire some to study these subjects at university and become professionals in relevant fields."

The project website is at www.usq.edu.au/digital-classroom.

For media enquiries:

Dr Caroline Perkins, Executive Director, Regional Universities Network, 0408 482 736
Issued by: Diana Streak, RUN Media Adviser, 022 536 064

www.run.edu.au