

2 SEPTEMBER 2015

REGIONAL RESEARCH REAPS RICH REWARDS

Australian regional universities are generating world-class research in areas such as sports injury, fertiliser costs, drone technology, livestock disease, countering fatigue among rural firefighters and suicide prevention, which can benefit not only their communities but have international applications.

These breakthroughs are included in a research brochure produced by the Regional Universities Network (RUN) aimed at key stakeholders in regional communities to communicate the relevance and value of the research undertaken at their universities.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Jan Thomas, said regional university research, more than ever, provides the foundations for excellence in developing innovation and quality of life.

"Its importance is reflected in the investments industry and governments are making in their collaborations with researchers from a broad spectrum of disciplines. The footprint that regional research makes into our daily lives is evident by the innovation and advancement to our social and economic wellbeing."

Professor Thomas said in many areas the high-quality university research being undertaken by regional universities is world recognised with their academic expertise delivering the research that matters most to regional and rural communities.

"Our discoveries are improving health care, allowing business and industry to compete more successfully on the global stage, increasing the capabilities of regional communities to become more resilient to change, benefitting our cultural heritage and understandings and bringing innovative ideas to challenge our thinking for the benefits of generations to come."

Professor Thomas said all students enrolled through regional universities benefit directly from the research that RUN universities are involved in.

"It expands their knowledge and inspires an appreciation and understanding of new ideas and that develops new solutions to the challenges we confront every day," she said

Among the academics included in the brochure, RUN Research: regionally embedded, globally engaged, is Australia's leading sports injury epidemiologist and sports injury prevention researcher, Professor Caroline Finch of Federation University, who was awarded the 2015 International Distinguished Career Award by the American Public Health Association's (APHA) Injury Control and Emergency Health Services (ICEHS) Section.

Others are Professor Sally Ferguson of CQUniversity, whose research in the area of fatigue

www.run.edu.au

risk management has benefitted rural firefighters; Southern Cross University's Dr Terry Rose, who is working on ways to reduce expensive fertiliser costs for Australian farms, research which also has the potential to stave off malnutrition in developing countries; and Dr Cheryl McCarthy of the University of Southern Queensland, whose research into drone technology will help farmers use less energy, water herbicide and labour.

Dr McCarthy and her sister Dr Alison McCarthy won 2015 Young Tall Poppy Science Awards for their work helping to improve productivity and sustainability in agriculture.

Associate Professor Myfanwy Maple of University of New England is researching suicide prevention in rural communities, particularly among men. Her work with suicide bereavement has gained international recognition.

Associate Professor Adam Polkinghorne of the University of the Sunshine Coast is trialling a vaccine to counter the impact of the Chlamydia bacterium on the live export industry, which could also arrest the decline of the koala and reduce antibiotics in the human food chain.

Available for interview: Professor Caroline Finch (FUA); Professor Sally Ferguson (CQU); Dr Cheryl McCarthy (USQ); Associate Professor Adam Polkinghorne (USC) Contact: 0422 536064

To download the brochure; http://www.run.edu.au/resources/Research_Brochure_2015.pdf

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