

**2 NOVEMBER 2015**

## **RUN UNIVERSITIES HAVE BEST YEAR EVER FOR AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL FUNDING**

Regional Universities Network universities have collectively had their best year ever for prestigious Australian Research Council (ARC) funding, winning over \$4 million for research projects.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Jan Thomas, said that all the RUN members had received Discovery Grants for pure research, and that most of the universities had also won Discovery Early Career Researcher awards.

"The excellence of the research being undertaken at RUN universities has been recognised in these grants. Our universities are strongly growing their research effort. Total ARC funding to RUN universities for grants commencing in 2016 is up by 18% compared with 2015 and by 100% on 2014 levels.

"As well as representing great pure research, many of the projects which will be funded from next year will have practical and strategic benefit for regional industries," Professor Thomas said.

"Disciplines covered by the funding are all of great relevance to regional Australia, and include plant and animal science, aquaculture, climate change, human behaviour and mathematics.

"Specific projects that have been funded include sleep strategies to help shift workers, addressing risk in train driving, improving poultry health, the impact of climate change on animals and ecosystems, the manufacture of polymers, and investigation of trends in children's television.

"It is critical that the quality research being undertaken in the RUN universities continues, including in the work of early career researchers and PhD students. The research must be adequately funded for the benefit of regional Australia and the nation as a whole.

"I congratulate all RUN's winners, and recognise that many other excellent projects narrowly missed out on funding," Professor Thomas said.

"The release of the Excellence in Research for Australia 2015 results later this year will further confirm the strength of the research effort in RUN universities".

The full list of successful RUN projects is attached and further information may be obtained directly from the universities.

[www.run.edu.au](http://www.run.edu.au)

## **Discovery Grants and Discovery Early Career Researcher Awards (DECRA) won by RUN universities**

- **CQUniversity**
  - Sleep strategies to enable shift workers to minimise cognitive impairment during night shifts (Discovery project grant - \$317,600)
  - Developing a novel framework for an optimised ensemble classifier (Discovery project grant - \$270,000)
  - Developing a train driving risk model that includes human factors, to enable rail organisations to better identify and mitigate safety risks (DECRA - \$373,536)
  - Developing methods to modulate microbiota to improve poultry health and productivity and reduce the need for antibiotics (DECRA - \$360,000).
- **Federation University**
  - Advancing a new mathematical theory of variational analysis which may lead to applications in optimisation (Discovery project grant - \$199,215).
- **Southern Cross University**
  - Measuring denitrification rates in communities dominated by different tropical and temperate seagrass species (Discovery project grant - \$305,300).
  - The role of mangroves in the sequestration and burial of nutrients (DECRA - \$393,434).
- **University of New England**
  - Future Keepers: impacts of climate change on ecosystem function providers (Discovery project grant - \$325,600)
  - Estimating genotype-environment interaction using genomic information (Discovery project grant - \$331,600)
  - Key mammalian survival strategies in a rapidly changing environment (DECRA - \$372,000).
- **University of Southern Queensland**
  - Improving the manufacture of geopolymer (Discovery project grant - \$340,000).
- **University of the Sunshine Coast**
  - Better understanding crustacean metamorphosis to aid fisheries recruitment and aquaculture production (Discovery project grant - \$148,000)
  - Key trends in the production and distribution of contemporary children's television (DECRA - \$373,536).

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