

7 NOVEMBER 2016

RUN WELCOMES PROF. GREG HILL AS CHAIR AND THANKS PROF. JAN THOMAS

Professor Greg Hill, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Sunshine Coast, will be the next chair of the Regional Universities Network (RUN).

He will take over from Professor Jan Thomas, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Southern Queensland, on 17 November 2016.

RUN's Executive Director, Dr Caroline Perkins, welcomed Professor Hill to the role and thanked Professor Thomas for her service.

"Since Professor Thomas became the Chair of RUN in September 2015, the network has continued to raise its profile and articulate the role of regional universities in regional development as well as in education, research and innovation.

"RUN wishes Professor Thomas all the best for her future role as Vice-Chancellor of Massey University in New Zealand," Dr Perkins said.

"I look forward to working with Professor Hill in the future to further RUN's contribution to regional Australia and the nation."

Outgoing Chair, Professor Jan Thomas, said RUN is building on strong foundations as it continues to test the metro-centric views that university education is for a privileged few.

"To have had the opportunity to lead the focus of higher education into regional issues and influence wide ranging structural change, fundamental to the needs of rural, regional and isolated communities, has been a tremendous privilege," Professor Thomas said.

"One of the biggest changes RUN has effected is in the expectations of government, which has developed a greater appreciation of the role of regional communities and their valuable contribution to the success of any university system.

"Those from regional areas which are often socially and economically disadvantaged should be given every opportunity to take up university study no matter their background or circumstance," she said.

"I extend my best wishes to the incoming Chair, Professor Hill, and thank all those involved with RUN for the extraordinary support they've provided in building and shaping the organisation we now have," she said.

Incoming Chair, Professor Greg Hill, said since its establishment in 2011, RUN had become

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an effective voice for tertiary education in regional Australia.

"I look forward to chairing RUN at a time when the government is poised to make major policy changes," he said.

"RUN has worked very well for regional universities, which provide tertiary education to those who might otherwise have to leave their home towns to access it.

"I'd like to extend my thanks to Professor Thomas and the other vice-chancellors who have previously served as RUN chair for the positive impact they have made.

"I see my role as continuing this process of informing decision makers about the importance of education in regional communities and the benefits it brings to the Australian economy as a whole," Professor Hill said.

For media enquiries:

Dr Caroline Perkins, Executive Director, Regional Universities Network, 0408 482 736

Issued by: Diana Streak, RUN Media Adviser, 022 536 064

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