

**12 FEBRUARY 2016**

## **RUN CONGRATULATES NATS ON NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM**

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) congratulates the new Nationals Leader and Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, and Deputy Leader, Senator the Hon Fiona Nash, and thanks the former Deputy Prime Minister, The Hon Warren Truss MP, for his contribution.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Jan Thomas, said that the new leader and deputy leader were strong supporters of regional universities and the network.

“Both Mr Joyce and Senator Nash are well aware of the importance of regional universities to regional communities and RUN looks forward to discussing with them how the contribution can be enhanced. In particular, we hope that regional universities can be more formerly recognised in regional development policy.

“Mr Truss has made a very significant contribution to regional Australia, most recently as Deputy Prime Minister and as Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. We wish him well in the future.

“Regional universities contribute to regional Australia through teaching and learning, research and innovation and service functions. These activities assist human capital development; regional governance and planning; community development; health and ageing; arts, culture and sport; environmental sustainability; and industry and business development.

“Much of the employment growth in Australia is occurring in high skilled jobs and this trend is likely to continue. Participation in higher education must continue to grow in regional Australia,” Professor Thomas said.

“It is vital for the national interest that regional universities continue to be recognised and supported by Government.”

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