

**5 MAY 2016**

## **REGIONAL FUTURES UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT AT JUNE CONFERENCE**

The future of regional Australia will be under the spotlight during a Regional Universities (RUN) conference, to be held at CQUniversity's Rockhampton North Campus in June.

The conference, which broadens and builds on previously successful RUN Digital Rural Futures conferences, is an initiative of the network's partner universities -CQUniversity, Federation University Australia, Southern Cross University, University of New England, University of Southern Queensland and University of the Sunshine Coast.

The aim of the event is to shine a light on the issues facing regional Australia and the solutions that can be adopted to bring about strong and successful futures for regional communities.

The conference will bring together academic, industry, community and government delegates from across Australia who have an interest in regional futures. Specifically, the conference will focus on the five key themes of economic, healthy, sustainable, digital and creative regional futures.

Chair of RUN, Professor Jan Thomas, says that with an election looming just one week after the conclusion of the conference, there has never been a better time to place regional issues on the agenda.

"It looks extremely likely that we will be going to the polls on 2 July, which means it is important for regional Australia to have its voice heard and this conference will provide a fantastic platform for this to happen.

"We will be joined by a number of high profile guest speakers including Dr Geoff Garrett, the Chief Scientist of Queensland and Jack Archer from the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) who will discuss regional trends and the importance of innovation when it comes to regional futures and sustainability.

"Importantly, on the last day of the conference, we will also be joined by a number of politicians from both sides, who will participate in a panel discussion with RUN Vice-Chancellors.

"This panel will be facilitated by Emma Alberici, presenter of the ABC Lateline program, and will be a great opportunity for regional issues to be highlighted and for delegates to learn more about what governments plan to do to strengthen the future for regional Australia," she said.

Professor Thomas said the conference had been designed to connect universities with industry and community to facilitate the establishment of long-term collaborations that have the potential to bring about new research linkages and educational partnerships.

"We really believe this conference will be the catalyst for academics, industry and community to identify possible opportunities to partner and collaborate on activities that will bring about beneficial outcomes for regional Australia."

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

The conference will be held from 21-24 June 2016, at the CQUniversity Rockhampton North campus in Queensland.

Conference registration is open until Friday, 17 June 2016.

For more information please visit [conference.run.edu.au](http://conference.run.edu.au)

**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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