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REGIONAL STUDENTS SHARE THEIR SUCCESS STORIES WITH AUSTRALIA

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) has published a booklet highlighting the extraordinary contribution which students who study in regional universities can make to regional areas and the nation as a whole.

Each of RUN's six member universities (CQUniversity, Federation University Australia, Southern Cross University, University of New England, University of Southern Queensland, University of the Sunshine Coast) nominated two students or graduates who exemplify the benefit of regional university study to keep skilled professionals in the regions.

These include a scientist turning problematic soil into productive farmland, a trainee doctor determined to work in a rural area, an Indigenous graduate steering communities on the road to financial empowerment, an engineering student committed to making buildings flood resistant and a Paralympian helping to alleviate chronic pain by using exercise as medicine.

RUN Chair, Professor Greg Hill, said, "There is an increasing need for more highly skilled university-trained professionals to work in the regions and RUN is at the forefront of making this happen.

"Studying at a regional university changes lives, not only for those studying, but for their families and communities. As well as stories of those who went to university straight from school, we have stories of mature age and part-time students and graduates who have studied in areas as diverse as engineering, medicine, teaching, agriculture, psychology, law, social work, finance and nursing. Many are first in family to go to university.

"The benefits of studying at a regional university have been cited as including practical degrees, regional work experience in partnership with regional industry, flexible mode of study, a friendly and supportive environment, high quality teaching and small classes," he said.

Seven out of 10 graduates from RUN universities go on to work in the regions, compared to two out of 10 graduates from other universities.

Regional Australia still has a higher education attainment rate about half or less than half that in major cities, and regional universities have a crucial part to play in increasing the number of people in the regions who go to university.

"As major cities become increasingly crowded and under pressure, these stories show the benefits of going to university in regional Australia," Professor Hill said.

Download the booklet at http://www.run.edu.au/cb_pages/publications.php

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