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REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES NETWORK APPOINTS NEW CHAIR

CQUniversity's Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Nick Klomp, has been appointed as the new chair of the Regional Universities Network (RUN), Australia's peak body for regional higher education providers.

The Rockhampton-based Professor Klomp will succeed University of the Sunshine Coast Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Helen Bartlett, as chair of the network.

Professor Klomp said he was excited to be stepping into the chair role at such a critical time for Australia's regional universities, as they fight back from the impacts of COVID and grapple with recent higher education reforms.

"Now, more than ever, regional universities are absolutely critical to Australia's productivity and to the social fabric of our nation.

"They change lives for the better, creating highly employable graduates and producing groundbreaking research to meet the ever-evolving industry and community needs of regional Australia," Professor Klomp said.

"Over the past nine years, RUN has been a great champion for the crucial work of our regional universities and has represented our interests well at the national level, but there is still much work to do.

"As incoming chair, I'm looking forward to continuing to ensure that our regional universities get a seat at the national decision-making table, and that government policy and legislation is enacted in the very best interests of the regions.

"Our regional students and researchers deserve their fair share of resources, funding and favourable policy – anything less is selling regional Australia short," Professor Klomp said.

Professor Klomp also thanked and commended Professor Bartlett for her effective leadership of RUN during her term as chair.

Professor Bartlett said that it had been an honour to serve as chair of RUN since mid-2018, a period of significant higher education policy reform and increased focus on regional universities, students and communities.

"Over this period, RUN has been very active in making submissions, presenting vital evidence from the regions and engaging constructively with key politicians on a range of policy issues that are critically important to regional education and regional development.

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“The Job-ready Graduates package made some significant concessions to measures advocated for by RUN, including more funding for student places in regional campuses, financial incentives for regional students and additional funding for research at regional universities, which demonstrates that our lobbying is having an impact and politicians are listening,” Professor Bartlett said.

“Now is not the time to take our foot off the accelerator – we must continue advocating for the needs of regional students and researchers.

“The impact of COVID-19 has further highlighted the value of regional universities to their communities and the economic recovery of the regions.

“All RUN members look forward to working with Professor Klomp as we continue to advocate for our regions.

“Addressing equity in education for regional Australians will take a generation and must remain a focus for future policy and program development,” Professor Bartlett said.

For media enquiries:

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

Issued by: Bernadette Smon, RUN Media Adviser, 0478 495 457

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