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RUN BID WINS REGIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION FUND

Researchers from the Regional Universities Network have secured funding to address regional mental health challenges, under the recently announced Regional Research Collaboration fund, which aims to enhance the research capacity of regional universities.

Led by Professor Myfanwy Maple from the University of New England and in collaboration with RUN universities, the project, The Regional Australia Mental Health Research and Training Institute (RAMHeART): Building place-based research capacity to improve mental health in regional, rural and remote Australia through the Regional Universities Network (RUN), aims to create the next generation of mental health researchers to address regional, rural and remote mental health challenges across the nation.

Executive Director of RUN, Mr Alec Webb, said that the innovative and impactful research projects funded under the scheme would solve real-world problems for the regions.

"I am delighted that RUN researchers have been recognised for their applied research that will genuinely change lives for those in our regions," Mr Webb said.

"Australians from regional, rural and remote areas experience higher levels of disadvantage and poorer mental health outcomes than their metropolitan counterparts. They have less access to healthcare and other vital services.

"Our RUN universities are all embedded within regional communities and play a transformative role in building institutional capacity and sustainability to address these complex challenges faced in the regions.

"With our combined geographic footprint across the nation, RUN is best placed to drive solutions to the health challenges of our regions and improve our overall regional wellbeing."

The project will develop a comprehensive virtual training platform for mental health researchers; build the mental health and wellbeing of individuals, priority populations and regional communities; and develop a data toolkit to assist in decreasing mental health related morbidity and mortality among regional Australians. Project partners include the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Well-being, Mental Health, and Suicide Leadership Body, Everymind, Lifeline Direct; the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health and the ANU Centre for Mental Health Research.

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Other projects funded at RUN member universities under the Scheme include:

- Federation University Australia's Research Centre for New Energy Transition.
- CQUniversity to develop hydrogen applications for regional industries.
- Charles Sturt University's Next Generation Water Engineering and River Management Hub.

"The projects funded under the program will deliver lifechanging solutions for regional communities. They demonstrate the importance of undertaking research at regionally headquartered universities," Mr Webb said.

"In collaboration with our partners in regional industry and other Australian universities, latent research potential in regional Australia will be developed through the projects, for the benefit of the nation."

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