

27 October 2021

RUN leading the way in regional engagement excellence

Regional University Network (RUN) members have showcased their excellence in engagement, with three member universities placing as finalists in the [2021 Engagement Australia Excellence Awards](#).

CQUniversity (CQU), University of New England (UNE) and University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) have made the finals for the Awards, which identify and celebrate the most exciting engagement activities that demonstrate far-reaching impact and innovation in the Australian and New Zealand economy and community.

The RUN members were announced as finalists for five of the seven award categories, from among 35 Australian and New Zealand universities that submitted a record total of 124 nominations for the Awards.

RUN Executive Director, Mr Alec Webb, said that RUN members were being recognised for their innovative approach to engaging with their communities to address regional need.

“To see three of our member universities all place as finalists in the Engagement Australia Excellence Awards, in more than one category each, is a testament to the important and innovative work our regional universities do in producing programs and initiatives that drive impact for our regional communities,” Mr Webb said.

“From mental health and agricultural science initiatives, to student and alumni support mechanisms, and unique industry partnerships, our regional universities have all bases covered, and are delivering pioneering solutions and improving outcomes across the regions.”

The University of the Sunshine Coast is being recognised for its work in mental health, with *The Alliance for Suicide Prevention* program a finalist for two awards.

In the Outstanding Leadership award category, USC’s Mervat Quirke is nominated for her regional influence in rapidly growing the mental health program, that seeks to improve mental health and resiliency to suicide.

CQUniversity and University of New England are both vying for the Excellence in Industry Engagement Award; UNE for its *Applied Agricultural Remote Sensing Centre* that has revolutionised the use of remote sensing technology for a dozen agricultural and horticultural industries across Australia; and CQU, for its *Queensland Future Skills Partnership* that aims to deliver tomorrow’s skills to regional and remote mining communities.

UNE is also competing against a group of other universities for the top gong in Excellence in Student Engagement, for its *Social Workers in Schools* placement program, while CQUniversity is competing for the Excellence in Alumni Engagement, for its *30 Minutes a Month* micro-volunteering alumni program.

The RUN members are hoping to be announced as winners in their respective categories on Tuesday, 30 November from 6-8pm via an [online awards ceremony](#).

For media enquiries:

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