

Media Release

Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture

New Council Members Signify Confidence

The ACDA announced that several new University members have signed up to the Council. Central Queensland University and Queensland University of Technology became Members in 2016 and the University of Southern Queensland and ANU will take up membership from 2017. Lincoln University and Massey University in New Zealand also have been accepted into the ACDA from this year.

ACDA President Professor Neal Menzies said that this expansion of membership in recent years demonstrates that there is increasing confidence in agriculture nationwide and universities see value in what the ACDA has been doing. "It is worth reflecting that ACDA has now completed its 10th year of activity. We started off with 11 Members and that has now grown to 20. I think the strong platform set by my predecessors has paid off and ACDA is now an important player in agricultural education and research."

The memberships by Lincoln University and Massey University are welcomed. "New Zealand is a close neighbour and it is a unique arrangement whereby NZ students can access Australian universities and Australian students can access NZ universities as if they were local students. NZ agriculture has many similarities to our own and we enjoy the collaboration that takes place between our universities" Professor Menzies said. The ACDA focus will remain on Australian issues but as there are only two agricultural universities in NZ, close links with those in Australia makes good sense according to Menzies.

A decade of ACDA activity has been influential in turning around the downward spiral of higher education in Agriculture. "We focused on compiling the best data we could find in order to be objective about what was happening" commented Professor Menzies. "The best guide for policy is a good set of data. It helped the university sector, the farm sector and industry to realign its agenda with the education needs of the present and the future. This also provided a strong base for our politicians to act as well."

The universities have shown increasing enrolments year on year since 2013 and enrolments suggest that 2017 is at least as good as 2016 intakes.

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