



RANGELANDS
AUSTRALIA

WINNER

2009 Australian Rural Education Award

Rangelands Australia was recently awarded the 2009 Australian Rural Education Award by the Society for Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA).

This award recognizes excellence in rural education, and in particular, initiatives that expand opportunities, bring about efficient and effective education, and provide educational benefits in rural Australia.

In accepting the award, Director of Rangelands Australia John Taylor acknowledged the hundreds of stakeholders who had contributed to the curriculum and course development processes, the investors such as Meat and Livestock Australia, the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Queensland Government and CSIRO, the RA staff, and the network of Rangeland Champions. Together, they have realized a vision of more accessible and more relevant higher education for land managers, Landcare and NRM facilitators, local government, educators, etc. in remote and regional Australia.

"This has been an extraordinary partnership, and a great testament to the benefits of a strategic, student-centered and demand-driven approach to provision of higher education in a disadvantaged region" John said. "The initiative has remained grounded in the real world through the engagement of experienced land managers, yet current and forward looking by the engagement of scientists from CSIRO, State agencies and Universities." The citation noted that the development of UQ's Rangeland Management postgraduate coursework program has been one of the most highly strategic knowledge and skill development initiatives in Australia, with needs and gap analyses, market research, stakeholders engaged and actively guiding curriculum and course development, and innovations in support for mature-aged students (eg. Champions network, *Getting into Further Study* preparatory course).

These strategies have underpinned strong growth in enrolments and the growing national and international reputation of the Rangeland Management program. Enrolments have grown strongly over each of the last four years, and the program has attracted a wide range of students from NSW, NT, Qld, SA and WA. RA's approach to curriculum and course development is now being adapted and applied by a consortium of USA-based universities developing an international range management curriculum.

The award was presented at SPERA's Silver Jubilee Conference. This is the first time the award has been conferred on a University-based education initiative.

Proudly supported by:

- Meat and Livestock Australia
- The University of Queensland
- Dept. Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry Australia
- Queensland Government
- CSIRO
- Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal

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