



Tuesday 28 April 2009

Total principal to head Primary Industries Education Foundation

School kids will learn more about primary industries – from the basics like milk coming from cows to more advanced scientific research – following the announcement to form a Primary Industries Education Foundation, Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said today.

“The inaugural board of the Foundation has been established with the principal of NSW Department of Primary Industries’ Tocal College Mr Cameron Archer appointed as inaugural chairperson,” Mr Macdonald said.

“Mr Archer is one of the country’s leading agricultural educators and along with his fellow directors will ensure the focus of the new Foundation will be on school children and encouraging them to learn more about primary industries.

“The Foundation, announced earlier this month by the federal government, will be a not-for-profit company - supported by NSW DPI among a range of industry, government and educational organisations.”

Mr Macdonald said the foundation would deliver education services to schools such as a web portal of educational resources on primary industries, advice on teacher professional development and information on career paths in primary industries.

“Those of us who are close to the primary industries know how vitally important they are to our economy, our social fabric and our environment,” he said.

“This new Foundation will ensure a broad spectrum of young people will be exposed to learning situations that expand their outlook on industries like agriculture, horticulture, forestry and fisheries.

“For the youngest school kids it could be about explaining where milk or bread comes from – and for the older secondary school students there might be more on the latest scientific research in the primary industries.”

Tocal College Principal, Cameron Archer, said the Inaugural Board of the Foundation consists of Ben Fargher (National Farmers Federation), David Thomason (Meat and Livestock Australia), John Kent (Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture) and Nigel Grant (National Association of Agricultural Educators).

The inaugural board will establish the company and then facilitate the appointment of a full board through Expressions of Interest called for during May.

Mr Archer said education was an integral part of NSW DPI’s services to rural industries.

“We have the one state wide specialist Registered Training Organisation, now known as Tocal College, which has two campuses, Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre at Yanco and CB Alexander Campus at Tocal, Paterson,” he said.

“Short Courses are delivered by DPI under the PROfarm banner, which has an arsenal of around 125 short courses ready to go depending on needs and seasonal requirements.

“PROfarm has been an outstanding success since its establishment in 2005 and over 18,000 people have undertaken courses, most of them farmers and hands-on land managers.

“This background in education will be invaluable as the new Primary Industries Education Foundation is established and starts to work with our young children.”

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