



**The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP**  
**Minister for Primary Industries**  
**Assistant Minister for Tourism and Major Events**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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Tuesday 29 April 2014

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND OYSTER FARMING ON THE  
AGENDA DURING VISIT TO PORT MACQUARIE**

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, has today launched Charles Sturt University's (CSU) new Mid North Coast Strategic Advisory Committee for Primary Industries with the Member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams.

Ms Hodgkinson said the committee will help shape educational and research programs for the new CSU Port Macquarie campus, relevant to the region's agricultural sector.

"This new advisory committee will include representatives from the local primary industries sectors and will assist CSU in meeting the needs of students along the North Coast," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"CSU is widely regarded as one of the finest providers of primary industries-related research and educational programs in NSW and I welcome their commitment to agricultural education, particularly here on the Mid North Coast."

Ms Hodgkinson said in December the NSW Government released a comprehensive report and government response into agricultural education and training in NSW, authored by Professor Jim Pratley.

"The NSW Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to supporting and further developing, in conjunction with industry, agricultural education in NSW," Ms Hodgkinson said.

Mrs Williams said the Port Macquarie campus of CSU is expected to have enrolment of about 4000 students by 2030, boosting the local economy.

"This strong commitment from CSU to the Port Macquarie region – particularly in the primary industries sector – is warmly welcomed," Mrs Williams said.

Head of Campus at CSU in Port Macquarie, Emeritus Professor Ross Chambers, said advice from the Mid North Coast's primary industries is essential to the successful development of programs in Port Macquarie.

"We expect the programs will include support for the seafood industries, as well as horticulture and agriculture," Professor Chambers said.

"The university is no stranger to research and educational programs in primary industries.

“CSU has grown to have one of the largest enrolments among Australian universities in the broad field of agricultural, animal and veterinary sciences. Primary industries are the largest field of PhD research at CSU.

“The launch of this new committee follows the allocation in 2013 of \$5.9 million in Commonwealth funding towards an \$8 million Food, Soil and Water Research Centre to be built by CSU in partnership with Port Macquarie-Hasting Council.”

Ms Hodgkinson said she also met with representatives from North Coast Local Land Services, landholders and oyster growers during today’s visit to Port Macquarie.

“Today’s visit provided an ideal opportunity to discuss a range of issues impacting the primary industries on the Mid North Coast,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“I thank the hard-working Member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams, for inviting me here today.”