

MEDIA RELEASE:

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NEW LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION Applications Now Open

The Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, a not for profit company dedicated to providing opportunities for community leaders across regional Australia, has entered into an association with Queensland coal explorer Blackwood Corporation to run a pilot leadership development program in regional Queensland.

The three month leadership development program is an important partnership between Blackwood Corporation and local communities in the Bowen, Galilee and Surat Basins.

The goal of the program is to discuss, discover, explore, create and implement positive thinking and leadership skills within communities affected by the issues of competing land use and access. Bringing together a diverse group of 15 participants into various learning forums, the unique 12-day course will run over three months enabling in-depth leadership development and networking. Dr Lesley Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive of the Foundation said: "We are pleased to announce the launch of this innovative relationship-building program, and delighted that a company like Blackwood has shown such support for developing the talent-base of local communities.

"The Foundation and Blackwood believe the program will bring together diverse representatives from the mining and agriculture industries to address some of the significant issues facing rural Australia around land use and its impact on rural and regional communities.

"This program has also been endorsed by AgForce, the Queensland Resources Council, and Ron Weatherall, Deputy Director General of Queensland Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services."

Blackwood Corporation Chief Executive Officer Todd Harrington said Blackwood's involvement in the program came from a desire to provide a long-term network of strong leaders in the community and the region, regardless of whether a working mine is established.

"Blackwood is proud to give the talented leaders in these communities further opportunity to use their skills and drive to build a strong network of people to help the region grow.

"The program is a great vehicle for developing the leadership capacity of the region so that the community can continue to thrive as a whole, with the skills acquired by participants flowing through to everything from local businesses to community projects."

The initiative will be fully funded by Blackwood Corporation, and is open to community leaders in **Pentland, Hughenden, Townsville, Surat Basin, Taroom, Chinchilla, Miles and Wandoan**. The program will also include Indigenous land holders, community and environmental leaders.

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Applications are now open and can be found on www.rural-leaders.com.au. Potential participants from the **Pentland, Hughenden, Townsville, Surat Basin, Taroom, Chinchilla, Miles and Wandoan** are encouraged to apply. The application process will close on May 25th 2012.

To find out more about this program please contact:

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