

Radio transcript for the Graham Healy Show

- Announcer:** It's just like the mid-day show, only earlier. It's Graeme Healy across the Darling Downs on 4GR and the South Burnett on Heart 1071.
- Graeme Healy:** It's 26 to 12 the Australian Agricultural College Corporation has just launched a new hi-tech marketing campaign to promote the college and its courses to potential students and their families. Those interested in the rural industries, of course it's not just Dalby as I mentioned before it's Longreach and Emerald and Burdekin and Mareeba.
- Graeme Healy:** The College's director is Malcolm Mackay – Malcolm's onboard at the moment on the phone to have a bit of a chat, so thanks very much for your time Malcolm.
- Malcolm Mackay:** Thanks Graeme.
- Graeme Healy:** The college it's certainly become larger than life, if that's probably the right terminology. I've just seen so many young people who've decided that the way of the land is what they want to do in the future and I guess your college in particular is one great avenue to further that career.
- Malcolm Mackay:** Indeed I think that's a very important part of modern agriculture Graeme and that it is a very high tech activity these days and that young people really do need some formal training in the processes to be able to further their career in agriculture.
- Graeme Healy:** Have the types of courses changed over the years that are available or are they much the same as they always have been, Malcolm?
- Malcolm Mackay:** They're changing all the time Graeme – I mean as the technology changes the need for additional expertise in the computer aided activities etc change and progressively change the nature of agriculture and the roles that young people are involved in. In addition to that you see that the total labour force in agriculture continues to decline, but the productivity for agriculture is going up and that only is resulting from that very significant work and understanding that new reference into Agriculture have and being able to get more efficient outcomes.
- Graeme Healy:** Yeah. Conservation and land management seem to be pretty much on the agenda these days. I mean does the college cater for courses that will look into those sorts of things?
- Malcolm Mackay:** We certainly do, we look at it from all perspectives, not only those that are going to be professionals operating in that area through the national parks and forestry management etc. But an understanding that it's a natural part of the agricultural production that something like 70% of all the natural resources land mass in Australia is under the stewardship of farmers, and when you realise that that sort of percentage is encumbered upon all farmers could be acting as responsible resources managers and therefore young people moving into agriculture and people who are out there working at updating their skills need to know and understand just how to look after the land so it's there for current production and for future generations.

- Graeme Healy:** Malcolm, how flexible can the college be in regards to courses – can they be part-time or are they all full-time courses?
- Malcolm Mackay:** Very much so, and part of the sort of general view I get from the public is about is the Agricultural college is the major area they've seen is the full-time on-campus students, but they only represent less than 10% of the total number of students that we deal with each year. The rest are people already in employment, doing short courses, upgrading their skills, looking for some new management skills or some new technology aspects to help them in their job careers.
- Graeme Healy:** What have been some of the more popular courses that students have been engaged in recently?
- Malcolm Mackay: They're very keenly involved in Livestock production, particularly beef-cattle production and a lot of interest in the horse courses, the equine courses – horse breeding, performance training etc and many of these people are going into becoming the trainers and providing the horses for the pleasure industry as well as still being the backbone to the cattle industry.
- Graeme Healy:** Alright, now this promotional DVD – you're going to be sending it to most secondary schools in Australia. Are there other ways that people can access it?
- Malcolm Mackay:** Um yes. It's currently up on YouTube, Facebook and Myspace – so many of the young people of course are very into this electronic medium and those DVDs are up there and accessible for all around the world in fact, through that medium. But we're actively promoting this DVD which gives a good indication of the sorts of things that they'd be doing, come see some of the facilities and particularly the sort of cropping and cattle facilities we have to allow people to get through the group experience and get them ready for a job.
- Graeme Healy:** Alright. And if people would like to know a little more about the college itself no doubt they can have a look at the college website as well?
- Malcolm Mackay:** Absolutely, it's a very simple one, www.aacc.edu.au
- Graeme Healy:** Okay, I do thank you for your time today, letting us know about it. Australian Agricultural College Corporation Director, Malcolm Mackay. Thank you Malcolm.
- Malcolm Mackay:** Thanks Graeme.