

MEDIA RELEASE

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Student support services central to quality graduate outcomes

Innovative Research Universities (IRU) Australia strongly supports the announcement by the Minister for Youth, Kate Ellis, that the Australian government will assist universities to restore and deliver essential student support services.

“Our member universities are committed to optimising graduate outcomes and this requires much more than the delivery of high quality learning and teaching and research training. Support services in areas such as child care, counselling, health, employment and housing are all critical to student retention and academic progress and are key factors in ensuring equitable access to higher education”, IRU Australia National Convenor, Professor John Yovich, said today.

“We consequently strongly support the government’s proposal to allow universities to set a capped student fee for supporting defined student services. We also welcome the intention to provide an option for eligible students to take out a loan for the fee under a HECS-like scheme. This will ensure that economically disadvantaged students are not deterred from studying”, Professor Yovich said.

“The IRU Australia universities – Flinders, Griffith, James Cook, La Trobe, Murdoch and Newcastle – recognise the importance of an effective student voice in university governance and effective delivery of student support services. We look forward to consulting with the government and student bodies on the proposed student representation and advocacy protocols,” Professor Yovich said.

“Addressing current shortfalls in funding for student support services will make a substantial difference to equity and quality graduate outcomes in Australian universities. Another key factor in the achievement of those outcomes is adequate student income support. We are hopeful that the Review of Australian Higher Education, due to report in December, will include recommendations to enhance existing student income support arrangements,” Professor Yovich said.

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