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IRU welcomes united university Cabinet role and farewells Senator Carr

The IRU welcomes the Government's decision to bring back together responsibility for higher education and research under the leadership of Senator Chris Evans, the Government Leader in the Senate.

Today's announcement of the new Gillard ministry also sees Senator Carr step down as Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research following many years of advocacy for universities and their contribution to Australia's future.

"The appointment of Senator Evans as Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research will ensure that the Government can focus on the full role of universities removing the incipient tensions emerging between teaching and learning and research policies. Universities bring together both, with each contributing to the other and the majority of academic staff concerned with both. It has been valuable to work with two portfolios since Labor took power but it will be that much easier to work with one" said Professor Barney Glover, Vice-Chancellor Charles Darwin University on behalf of the IRU.

"We are saddened to see Senator Carr move away from a direct ministerial role with universities after four years as Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. Senator Carr has made an enormous contribution to supporting and extending investment in research. He has been a sterling supporter of universities over many years.

"Senator Carr has long held a strong interest in Australian universities, addressing the needs of universities in his inaugural speech to the Senate in 1993 and being the driving force for many Senate inquiries." said Professor Glover.

"Following many years of discussing a means to assess the quality of universities' research output Senator Carr made it happen. He oversaw the first Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) assessment in 2010 with the second assessment now underway. ERA provides a clear sense of where our national strengths lie, where we can improve, and how we can ensure research funding supports high quality research across all Australian universities".

"The IRU thanks Senator Carr for his service to higher education and research. We know he will continue to be an ardent advocate for universities. We look forward to working with him with his new responsibilities."

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