

MEDIA RELEASE 02/2012

Wednesday 29 February 2012

IRU priorities for university base funding

The IRU identifies five priorities for Government action in response to the Report of the Base Funding Review (2011).

1. The Government should commit to the Bradley review's recommendation for a 10 per cent increase in Government base funding to universities as an immediate goal. It has already put in place increases worth 3.5%.
2. The priority initiatives to achieve this are:
 - Contemporary Learning Spaces, a infrastructure grant based on enrolments;
 - enhancing programs to support access to university through:
 - raising and maintain the loadings for students from low Socio Economic backgrounds for students of programs that enable enrolment in bachelor degrees; and
 - creation of an Indigenous access and course completion loading;
 - a Course Renewal Innovation Program, to support innovative course redevelopment that over time adds value for all students; and
 - improvement to base funding rates for the most underfunded discipline areas.
3. There should be a single maximum rate of student contribution, no higher than the current second band of \$8050 a year, not three distinct rates by discipline.
4. That student enrolments remain the basis for allocating base funding, including any identified research element.
5. That all Government supported places in a discipline, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, be funded at the same rate.

"The Report of the Base Funding Review poses a major challenge for universities and Government to respond to. We need to use it to improve universities' capacities to meet the standards set for, and expected of, higher education over the long term," said Professor Ian O'Connor, IRU Chair.

"The Base Funding Review demonstrates that the gap in university resourcing is real. Its data suggests as much as 20% to 30% additional base revenue is required. We cannot expect all of its proposals to be implemented but need to prioritise," he said releasing two IRU statements:

- [Renewing University Base Funding](#)
- [Supporting student demand – a single student charge](#)

In addition the IRU releases its [response to each of the Review's 29 specific recommendations](#).

"Our argument for a single standard charge is simple. Australia requires graduates across a range of disciplines. The new demand driven system encourages potential students to pursue their individual preferences as the best basis to ensure a well-balanced graduate population with a mix of knowledge and skills.

"To charge some students more for the benefit of their degree simply punishes them for pursuing their interests. Students should not be influenced by the cost to them in their choice of course but focus on what is likely best suited to them. Universities in offering Government supported places should compete in terms of the nature and quality of the education they can provide not its price," Professor O'Connor concluded.

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