

MEDIA RELEASE

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Further pressure on university capability

Government support for research and teaching suffers from two major reductions in future university funding announced in today's Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO).

However, at a time of great fiscal pressure the Government has maintained its commitment to research grants through the ARC and NHMRC and left intact the demand driven funding of student places, both supported by an effective indexation mechanism.

As Universities continue the necessary expansion of teaching and research, it is important that they have sufficient funds to sustain those activities" said Professor Ian O'Connor, Chair IRU.

"The Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE) initiative underpins university research, ensuring research projects can achieve their outcomes. Pushing out planned increases to SRE funding will hold back our international competitiveness. Government support for high quality research has been pivotal to the success of Australian Universities. In the past decade research outputs have doubled, with half of all Australian Universities now ranked in the top 5% in the world.

Facilitation Funding will also cease from 2014.

"Facilitation funding along with performance funding were two responses to The Bradley report which increased funding per student, giving universities more capacity to meet student education needs. With the 2011 loss of most performance funding there is little now that addresses the real cost of educating tomorrow's students, many more of whom are enrolling consistent with the government's targets for higher-education attainment. This remains an important challenge for the future to underpin the valuable widening of access to university."

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