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### IRU network calls for Government action after university funding cuts

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) network is calling on the Australian Government to reduce the financial burden on universities through costly bureaucratic red tape following Saturday's announcement that \$2.3 billion will be cut from the university system over the next four years.

The Chair of the IRU, Professor Barney Glover, said the magnitude of the changes to university funding announced by the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, Dr Craig Emerson, was "regrettable".

"While the indexation has not been affected, the productivity dividend announced by the Minister is essentially a temporary cut in indexation," Professor Glover said.

"The IRU does not at all question the merit of Government investment in School education through the Gonski reforms, which adds to this Government's substantial increases in school funding, but this investment is being funded via dramatic cuts to higher education, the most significant since 1997".

"We are particularly concerned about the impact on students by changes to student scholarships. This places further pressure on the HELP system, which requires student debts to remain at levels that most graduates will be able to repay" Professor Glover said.

"The IRU strongly endorses the UA's immediate call for action to reduce the Government's costly bureaucratic impost on universities," he said.

"The burden of Government red tape is clearly affecting the higher education sector and its productivity with little benefit."

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