

## IRU Statement 15/2013, 16 September 2013

### IRU congratulates Coalition Government

The Innovative Research Universities congratulates the Ministers selected by the Prime Minister Mr Abbott to form the Liberal National Coalition Government. The IRU looks forward to working with Christopher Pyne as Minister for Education and Sussan Ley as Assistant Minister.

“There are important challenges ahead for the Coalition Government” said Professor Barney Glover, Vice-Chancellor, Charles Darwin University and Chair, IRU. “The Coalition inherits valuable policy settings including demand driven funding for undergraduate students and a research system that supports good research where it is found across the university system.”

“The Coalition’s policy statement, *Real Solutions*, identifies higher education as one of the five pillars of the Australian economy and commits to maintaining current funding arrangements, fixing regulation overload and addressing the infrastructure gap. Based on our discussions with Government members we are confident that they will pursue these issues” Professor Glover said.

We also look forward to engaging with Ministers with significant roles affecting universities in Scott Morrison as Minister for Immigration, Peter Dutton as Minister for Health, Julie Bishop as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Robb as Minister for Trade and Investment, Ian Macfarlane as Minister for Industry and Senator Scullion as Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

I also thank Senator Brett Mason for his strong support for universities as the Coalition’s Spokesman in Opposition and Senator Fiona Nash who argued the cause of regional students. We wish them well in their new responsibilities.”

The major issues for the first year of the Government are:

- Whether to implement the previous Government’s last minute savings measures to reduce funding per place, turn grants to students from poorer backgrounds into loans, and discourage self funded postgraduate education;
- Responding effectively to the review of higher education regulation both for the future quality regulation arrangements and rationalising the overlap between regulation for higher education for all students and the particular requirements for international students
- Carrying through initiatives to simplify the research grants process while retaining a focus on supporting the best ideas across all institutions, based on analysis of the potential outcomes from the project rather than its title
- Designing long term support for higher education infrastructure to support future teaching and research needs at a time of major changes in delivery and operations
- Constructing a viable way ahead to assess the impact of university research to demonstrate its value and each university’s contribution
- Re-invigorating support for Australia’s international student capability, consistent with the Coalition’s strong support for this industry as one of Australia’s economic pillars, including putting in place a new Colombo scheme to encourage thousands of Australian students to study or do work experience in Asia.

## Contact

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