

IRU STATEMENT 09/2014

Universities Critical to Innovation and Competitiveness

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) applaud the Government's commitment to enhancing industry driven research in Australia's universities in its Industry Innovation and Competitiveness Agenda.

"Universities are critical to the innovation process, providing research services to industry partners that allow them to take research findings and translate these into new products and services, open up new markets and improve their internal production and administration processes," said Conor King, IRU Executive Director.

IRU members have a focus on contributing to industry driven research, including with businesses based in Australia's fast growing outer suburban and regional areas, where IRU members are the dominant research providers. The reforms must encourage greater outcomes for industry and businesses across Australia.

The potential to turn Australia's world leading research into innovative products and services relies on translating research into practice. The IRU particularly welcomes the Government's commitment to funding early stage commercialisation activity. This is proposed as part of the new Industry Growth Centre programme which targets five important sectors. Such targeting has uses to focus available Government resources. Overall it is more important to support commercialisation of products and services across all areas based on potential for a positive economic return, not sector based generalisations of relevance to Australia.

The Industry Innovation and Competitiveness Agenda recognises Asia as crucial to Australia's economic future. New products and services will only flourish if they can connect to international markets, with Asia a key target. IRU members have led Australia's universities into Asia from their foundation. We will look to expand those connections in support of the Government's Agenda.

This will create opportunities for Australian businesses and researchers to build links in the Asian region, opening up new markets, avenues for foreign investment and partnership possibilities.

IRU members will consider the proposals in more detail. We look forward to working with the Government as they are implemented.

END

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